

School Reform News

©2004 The Heartland Institute

THE MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR SCHOOL REFORMERS

Vol 8 No 2 February 2004

Supreme Court Hears “Free Exercise” Case



by George A. Clowes

On December 2, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the matter of *Locke v. Davey*, a case whose outcome has significant implications for the future of publicly funded school vouchers.

The case involves a lawsuit brought by Joshua Davey, who as an undergraduate at Washington's Northwest College was denied a Promise Scholarship from the state because he chose to pursue a degree in theology.

Promise Scholarships are awarded to Washington state students based on criteria of academic merit, financial need, and attendance at an accredited college. Although Davey met all the criteria and was told he qualified for the scholarship, his choice of theology as a major caused the state to deny him access to any scholarship funds.

Washington's denial of scholarship funds was specific to the choice of a theology degree. Had Davey taken the same theology classes without declaring theology as a

COURT p. 16

Picture Desk Photos

Joshua Davey, an evangelical Christian and student at Harvard Law School, poses near the Martha and Mary Chapel in Sudbury, Massachusetts. He is a litigant in a civil action to determine if the state of Washington can refuse him a scholarship for religious education.

Competition Arrives for Teacher Certification

by Robert Holland

Schools of education and allied accreditation and teacher licensing agencies now face a competitor who is challenging their longtime role as exclusive gatekeepers to public school teaching.

With the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) deadline looming for public schools to be employing “highly qualified” teachers, the new American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) figures to be an increasingly important player in the education arena in 2004 and beyond.

By the end of 2003, two states—Idaho
CERTIFICATION p. 4

Tests Reveal Students Unprepared for College

by Kelly Amis Stewart

The advent of high-stakes testing is revealing more than just information on what American high school students know and are capable of doing; it is also revealing a significant shortfall between that assessment of actual skills and what schools have been telling students about their achievement and ability.

For some students, the failure to pass a high school exit exam is the first warning signal they may be sorely unprepared for the demands of college. A Massachusetts study indicates most students use the

TESTS p. 6

INSIDE SRN

- 3 House OKs DC Voucher Plan
- 7 Bad Grammar Afflicts Job Apps
- 9 Book Review: *School Figures*
- 13 Who Needs School Choice?
- 14 Interview: Victoria Martino
- 17 Choice Programs Tighten Up
- 18 Review: *Building Character*

ALEC Issues Report Card on American Education

by Krista Kafer

“[T]he past two decades’ massive infusion of public dollars into K-12 education has done nothing to improve student performance as measured by nationally standardized tests.”

That’s the sobering conclusion of the American Legislative Exchange Council’s 10th edition of the *Report Card on American Education: A State-By-State Analysis, 1980-*

2002, released in November 2003. In analyzing achievement and spending, authors Jack R. Stevens and Rea S. Hederman, Jr. found no correlation between education inputs—such as per-pupil spending and teacher salaries—and education outputs, such as achievement on standardized tests.

The report card provides statistics and analysis on achievement, educational

ALEC p. 8

The Heartland Institute
19 South LaSalle #903
Chicago, IL 60603

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
BEAVER DAM, WI
PERMIT NO. 412

ACTS SCHOOL SUPPLIES

ACTS

549 North Route 83
Grayslake, IL 60030
800-889-2287 (ACTS)
www.actstextbooks.com

K-12 Grade Curriculum Packages

All under \$250.00!!

WE SELL PRODUCTS FROM:

Christian Liberty Press; Modern Curriculum Press; ISHA
Easy Grammar; PowerGlide Foreign Language; Cram
Publications (Globes, Maps); Leap Frog Learning Toys;
Crayola Crayons; Bob Jones University Press; Trend
Enterprises (Decorations, Posters); ETA Cuisenaire
(Math, Sci, Manipulatives); Pearson Learning (Sing,
Spell, Read, Write).

SAXON MATH

S58000 Math K \$52.00
S58001 Math 1 \$79.00
S58002 Math 2 \$79.00
S58003 Math 3 \$80.00
S58054 Math 54 Kit 2nd Ed. \$41.00
S58065 Math 65 Kit 2nd Ed. \$41.00
S58076 Math 76 Kit 3rd Ed. \$42.00
S58087 Math 87 Kit 2nd Ed. \$44.00
S58090 Alg. 1/2 Kit 3rd Ed. \$45.00
S58010 Alg. 1 Kit 3rd Ed. \$46.00
S58020 Alg. 2 Kit 2nd Ed. \$47.00

S0L90 Alg. 1/2 Sol. Manual 3rd Ed. \$22.00
S0L10 Alg. 1 Sol. Manual 3rd Ed. \$22.00
S0L20 Alg. 2 Sol. Manual 2nd Ed. \$22.00
S0L13 Adv. Math Sol. Manual 2nd Ed. \$22.00
SFC1 FIRST GRADE FACTCARDS \$29.00
SFC2 SECOND GRADE FACTCARDS \$29.00
SFC3 THIRD GRADE FACTCARDS \$29.00
SMBK KINDERGARTEN MEETING BK. \$10.00
SMB1 FIRST GRADE MEETING BK. \$10.00
SMB2 SECOND GRADE MEETING BK. \$10.00
SMB3 THIRD GRADE MEETING BK. \$10.00

- **Quality Curriculum At Affordable Prices:** math; science; history; phonics; reading; spelling; handwriting; foreign language; grammar literature; geography.
- **Teacher Supplies At Great Prices:** crayons; glue; construction paper; poster board; drawing paper; reward stickers; name tags; classroom aid posters; yarn; pens; pencils; craft bags; cellophane paper; art tissue paper; presentation boards; birthday announcements; award certificates; modeling clay; water color paints; glitter; notepads; handwriting pads; thin-line notebook paper; thick-line notebook paper.
- **Classroom Essentials:** globes; maps; computers; banners; posters; border decorations.
- **School Fundraising:** www.dollarsforscholars.com; afreecollegescholarship.com; actstextbooks.com.

ATTENTION HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES!

Bring this ad to our booth and save \$5.00 off any purchase of \$70.00 or more!

800-889-2287

www.actstextbooks.com; www.afreecollegescholarship.com

School Reform News

EDITORIAL OFFICES



The Heartland Institute
19 South LaSalle Street #903
Chicago, Illinois 60603
312/377-4000 voice • 312/377-5000 fax
e-mail think@heartland.org

School Reform News is available on the Internet. Point your web browser to <http://www.heartland.org>.

PUBLISHER
Joseph L. Bast

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
Nikki Saret

EDITOR
Diane Carol Bast

MANAGING EDITOR
George A. Clowes, Ph.D.

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
Kevin Fitzgerald, Ross Van Overberghe

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Nikki Saret

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Latreece Vankinscott

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Mike Antonucci, Robert Holland,
Krista Kafer, David Kirkpatrick
Nina Shokraii Rees (on leave)
Paul Seibert, Lisa Snell, Don Soifer
Kelly Amis Stewart, Kevin Teasley
Herbert J. Walberg Ph.D., Lee H. Walker

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Joseph Bast, Walt Buchholtz
Robert Buford, James Fitzgerald
Paul Fisher, Dan Hales
William Higginson, James L. Johnston
Roy E. Marden, David H. Padden
Frank Resnik, Leslie Rose, Lee Tooman
Herbert J. Walberg Ph.D.
Lee H. Walker, Thomas Walton



ADVERTISING: *School Reform News* accepts display advertising and advertising inserts. For an advertising kit with rate card and editorial calendar, contact Associate Publisher Nikki Saret at 312/377-4000, e-mail nikki@heartland.org.

School Reform News is published 11 times per year by The Heartland Institute. Subscriptions are \$36 per year. Order online at www.heartland.org. Heartland is a nonprofit and nonpartisan public policy research organization serving the nation's federal and state elected officials, journalists, Heartland Members, and other opinion leaders. Its activities are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

© 2004 The Heartland Institute. Nothing in this issue of *School Reform News* should be construed as reflecting the views of The Heartland Institute, nor as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any legislation.

CAPITOL HILL BEAT

House Approves Final DC Voucher Plan

by Don Soifer

As expected, the House of Representatives did its part to advance President George W. Bush's voucher plan for the District of Columbia, passing a \$328 billion omnibus spending bill in a special, one-day session in early December.

The bill, H.R. 2673, included a landmark \$13 million school choice program for the nation's capital. It passed by a vote of 242-176. The bill's next, and next-to-last, stop before becoming law will be a vote in the Senate, expected to take place in late January.

"School choice will make a huge difference in the lives of thousands of low-income children. Choice should not be limited to families with the means to

"[T]he House of Representatives ... [passed] a \$328 billion omnibus spending bill in a special, one-day session in early December. The bill ... included a landmark \$13 million school choice program for the nation's capital."

make a choice....," noted Representative Tom Davis (R-Virginia), one of the plan's main sponsors and supporters.

"I have traditionally opposed federal dollars going to private schools because I think federal dollars ought to be targeted to public schools," Davis added. "But, for the District, I think we have to ask this question: Wouldn't more choices funded by new federal dollars provide a needed alternative for low-income children attending low-performing schools?"

Davis noted the school choice language contained \$40 million in new federal education funding for the District, including \$13 million for teacher training and recruitment and improving student achievement. Overall, the omnibus bill gave the District a \$545 million boost in federal aid as part of its \$5.6 billion 2004 budget.

The delayed passage of the DC choice plan caused many observers to worry it would not be able to get off the ground in time for the 2004-2005 school year.

Second Consecutive Clean Audit

In December, Secretary of Education Rod Paige announced that, for the second consecutive year, his department had earned a "clean" financial audit in accordance with standard accounting principles. The encouraging verdict by national accounting firm Ernst & Young was only the Department of Education's third in its entire 23-year history.

Paige and his chief financial officer, Jack Martin, described the clean audit as an important result of adhering to President Bush's official Management Agenda. The department has instituted new quarterly senior management financial reports, applied new internal controls and management policies, and corrected "several potential areas of concern" referenced in last year's audit.

In 2003, then-Deputy Secretary of Education William Hansen outlined several new financial management initiatives in testimony before Representative Pete Hoekstra's (R-Michigan) Select Subcommittee on Education. Those initiatives included modernizing student aid delivery, improving default loan recovery targets, ending credit card abuses, issuing new policies for department purchases and travel, and following a number of other steps toward establishing a "culture of accountability."

McKeon Launches "College Cost Central"

The House Education Committee, along with its 21st Century Competitiveness Subcommittee Chairman Buck McKeon (R-California), recently announced its new "College Cost Central" Web site.

Described as "a resource for parents, students, and taxpayers fed up with the rising cost of higher education," the Web site invites comments and suggestions as the committee prepares for new higher education legislation in 2004. The site can be found at <http://www.edworkforce.house.gov> and includes a survey and comment form.

"As a matter of principle," said McKeon, "every student deserves the right to pursue his or her education goals. However, lack of financial resources continues to prevent millions of highly qualified students each year from attending college."

Teaching American History Grant Program

Also in December, the Department of Education announced it would be accept-



Representative Tom Davis (R-Virginia)

ing applications for its Teaching American History grant program. Although final appropriations levels had yet to be set by Congress, it was expected the program would offer \$100 million in new awards.

The program is designed to raise student achievement by improving teachers' knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of traditional American history. Local Education Agencies (LEAs), including charter schools considered LEAs under state law, are eligible to submit applications by March 2, 2004. The average size of each grant is expected to be \$250,000 per year for three years.

A major program priority is that projects address "traditional American history." Applications could, for example, teach significant issues, episodes, and turning points in the history of the United States, and how the words and deeds of individual Americans have determined the nation's course.

"This history," describes the grant announcement, "teaches how the principles of freedom and democracy, articulated in our founding documents, have shaped—and continue to shape—America's struggles and achievements, as well as its social, political, and legal institutions."

Don Soifer is executive vice president of the Lexington Institute (<http://www.lexingtoninstitute.org>). His email address is soifer@lexingtoninstitute.org.

INTERNET INFO

Information on the Teaching American History Grant Program is available from the December 23, 2003 *Federal Register* at <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/2003-4/122303d.html>.

Certification

Continued from page 1

and Pennsylvania—had officially accepted the ABCTE's Passport to Teaching as a new way for aspiring and current teachers to earn full certification based on subject-matter expertise and classroom know-how. Other states soon may be following their lead, because ABCTE offers an innovative way to get qualified teachers into classrooms without requiring them to earn a degree from a college of education.

The American Board recently was awarded a \$35 million federal grant to expand certification options for teachers, particularly in high-need areas such as science and special education. Secretary of Education Rod Paige recognized the ABCTE's viability in his 2003 annual report on meeting the NCLB's call for all classrooms to be staffed by "highly qualified" teachers by the 2005-06 school year.

To be considered highly qualified under NCLB, a teacher must have a bachelor's degree, full certification/licensure as defined by each state, and demonstrated competence in each core academic subject he or she teaches. Paige has repeatedly said that alternative routes to certification will be welcome.

"The American Board recently was awarded a \$35 million federal grant to expand certification options for teachers, particularly in high-need areas such as science and special education."

Certification Without Indoctrination

J.E. Stone, an East Tennessee State University professor of education who is a critic of conventional teacher certification, believes the federal backing gives ABCTE the clout to develop and validate more alternative certification exams and to carry its message into more states.

"As more states come on line, certification without indoctrination will become a very popular option for prospective teachers. Look for a substantial increase in ABCTE-certified teachers in the next year or two," said Stone, founder of the online Education Consumers Clearinghouse.

In late December, Buffy DeBreux-Watts, the ABCTE's director of marketing and outreach, said at least 10 additional states were looking into steps that would be needed, such as amending codes and regulation, to add ABCTE to a menu of options for teachers and aspiring teachers.

Critics of the long-dominant system of teacher licensing contend it attempts to steep all would-be K-12 teachers in the philosophy of learner-centered or "progressive" education, with teachers acting as facilitators ("guides on the side") instead of as direct transmitters of knowledge and skills ("sages on the stage"). After analyzing a century's worth of data,



Kathleen Madigan is president of the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence.

Jeanne Chall, a respected researcher at Harvard Graduate School of Education who died in 1999, concluded that, for most students, teacher-directed instruction was most effective in raising their achievement.

Passport to Teaching

ABCTE's new Passport to Teaching certification can be earned by career-switchers, recent college graduates, or active teachers seeking full certification. In addition to passing the American Board's tests of their subject-matter knowledge and their grasp of teaching methods (pedagogy), candidates must hold a bachelor's degree and pass a criminal background check.

Stone noted that although there is a pedagogical component to the testing, it is not geared to the learner-centered doctrines favored by the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), two powerful elements of the education establishment. Nor are candidates required to have a degree from a college of education or even to have taken courses from such colleges.

DeBreux-Watts said part of the ABCTE process entails candidates using experienced educators who help them develop a diagnostic self-assessment to build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses.

The ABCTE examinations use computer simulations to have candidates gauge situations that arise in classrooms and muster the skills to meet them. As part of demonstrating their knowledge, candidates must write a cogent essay, in part to demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively with other educators and with parents.

Master Teachers

The American Board plans to launch a second tier of testing in 2004 that will offer veteran teachers the opportunity to win certification as Master Teachers. Still under development, this high-level certification will require teachers not only to pass rigorous tests but also to submit so-called "value-added" data proving they have helped students raise their achievement significantly.

That prospect has caught the attention of the NBPTS, which was founded

in the 1980s with the backing of the national teacher unions to offer veteran teachers the opportunity to gain national certification and to be rewarded for it.

Aware of the emerging competition, the NBPTS posts on its Web site side-by-side contrasts between its requirements and those under development by ABCTE, which sprang into existence in 2001 through the efforts of reform groups like the Education Leaders Council and the National Council on Teacher Quality.

The National Board implicitly criticizes the American Board for not yet having explained how its teacher value-added data will be "collected, presented, and assessed." Yet, NBPTS's own standards do not consider at all a teacher's impact on student test scores, a policy the National Board defends. The NBPTS contends its policy of having teachers submit samples of student work and explanations of how they evaluated it—along with videotapes of themselves teaching—provides "a more authentic measure of learning than simply relying on test scores that may not provide enough information on a specific teacher's actions and that may be difficult to attribute to a single teacher."

Rapidly Rising Costs

However, states that decided in recent years to hand out hefty annual bonuses to teachers who won NBPTS certification are hearing from legislators questioning the rapidly rising price tag for a program that offers no evidence it is improving student achievement. For

instance, Georgia awards an automatic 10 percent annual pay raise for the 10-year life of a NBPTS certificate. The cost to the state will rise from a mere \$100,000 in fiscal year 2000 to \$15.6 million in fiscal year 2005.

Former Georgia Governor Roy Barnes, who recently became NBPTS chairman, defends the expense as a worthwhile incentive for teachers; however, some members of the Peach State's House Appropriations Committee are questioning whether NBPTS is the wisest use of money in tight education budgets.

Among other states facing major fiscal hits are North Carolina and Florida, which rank 1-2 in the number of NBPTS-certified teachers—North Carolina with 6,641 and Florida with 4,941. Georgia has just pushed above the 1,000 mark.

Robert Holland is a senior fellow at the Lexington Institute, a public policy think tank in Arlington, Virginia. His email address is holland@lexingtoninstitute.org.

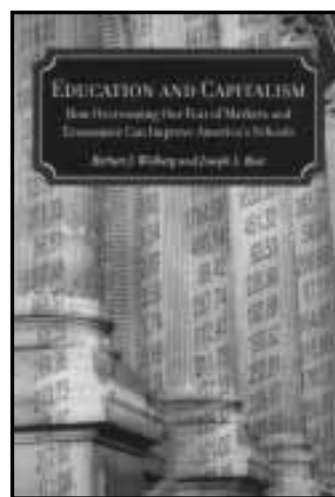
INTERNET INFO

Further information on the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) is available online at <http://www.abcte.org>.

Further information on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is available online at <http://www.nbpts.org>.

Education & Capitalism

How Overcoming Our Fear of Markets and Economics Can Improve America's Schools



"Walberg and Bast have written a scholarly, readable, and timely book that cogently explains how market competition can promote school improvement. I recommend it as a college-level text in economics, education or public policy, and to anyone who cares about the education of our children."

JOSEPH P. VITERITTI
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

"A first rate book on improving America's schools that challenges the popular fallacies, misunderstandings, and romantic notions that many have about capitalism and economics and that makes the case for market-based school reforms."

BRUNO V. MANNO
ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

Order your copy today!

\$15, 416 pages, November 2003

Contact

The Heartland Institute

19 South LaSalle Street #903, Chicago, IL 60603

Ph: 312/377-4000 Fax: 312/377-5000

www.heartland.org

Most Children Left Behind in Urban Public Schools

by George A. Clowes

Although presented to the public in positive, sometimes glowing terms, the first-ever reports of comparable data on reading and mathematics achievement in 10 of the nation's largest urban school districts reveal the staggering extent of the failure of the American public school system to deliver any reasonable measure of education to most of the children in those districts, particularly to children from minority and low-income families.

The study—the Trial Urban Assessment from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—shows only 19 percent of eighth-graders in large central city school districts can read at a proficient level, compared to 30 percent nationally. In mathematics, only 17 percent of eighth-graders in large central city school districts are proficient, compared to 27 percent nationally; in several of the urban districts, math proficiency levels drop to the single digits. Proficiency levels for minority and low-income students are even lower.

In announcing the results from the Trial Urban Assessment in December, U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige gave credit to the 10 districts for “courageously volunteering” to participate. The 3 million children in those districts, he said, “are often the ones who are left wandering in the academic shadows of their more privileged peers.”

The results of the Urban Assessment paint a bleak future for minority and low-income students who attend urban public schools. Based on the proficiency levels achieved by these students after eight years, it seems clear that, whatever activities may be taking place in urban public schools, education isn't one of them.

Reading

Although 30 percent of eighth-graders nationally can read at a proficient level, the percentage plummets to just 12 percent for black eighth-graders. And only four of the 10 urban districts could match or marginally exceed this low level of eighth-grade reading achievement: Boston (14 percent), Charlotte-Mecklenburg (14 percent), New York City (13 percent), and Houston (12 percent). The remaining six districts perform worse than the national average: Chicago (10 percent), Atlanta (8 percent), Cleveland (8 percent), the District of Columbia (8 percent), Los Angeles (7 percent), and San Diego (7 percent).

Hispanic eighth-graders achieve at a slightly higher level in reading than black eighth-graders, but still only 14 percent nationally read at a proficient level. In Los Angeles, the figure drops to 6 percent.

Among low-income eighth-grade students—those eligible for the federal Free/Reduced Price Lunch Program—only 15 percent nationally read at a proficient level. Only two urban districts managed to reach even this low level: New York City (18 percent) and Boston (16 percent).

Math

While reading achievement among minority and low-income students may

KEY	
CHAR	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
US	United States (Public)
NYC	New York City Public Schools
SD	San Diego City Unified School District
BOS	Boston School District
LCC	Large Central City Schools (Public)
HOU	Houston Independent School District
CHI	City of Chicago School District 229
LA	Los Angeles Unified School District
ATL	Atlanta City
CLE	Cleveland Municipal School District
DC	District of Columbia Public Schools

be extremely low, math achievement is even lower.

Only 7 percent of black eighth-graders nationally can do math at a proficient level. Six of the 10 urban districts cannot reach even this low hurdle: Boston (6 percent), Cleveland (5 percent), Chicago (4 percent), Atlanta (3 percent), the District of Columbia (3 percent) and Los Angeles (2 percent). These are failure rates of enormous magnitude, with tragic—and lifelong—consequences for the children involved.

Hispanic eighth-graders achieve at a slightly higher level in math than black eighth-graders, but still only 11 percent nationally can do math at a proficient level. In the District of Columbia and Los Angeles, that figure drops to 3 percent; in Cleveland, it drops even lower, to 2 percent.

Among low-income eighth-grade students, only 11 percent nationally do math at a proficient level. However, only two urban districts managed to top or match this low level: New York City (15 percent) and Boston (11 percent). In Atlanta and the District of Columbia, only 2 percent of low-income eighth-graders could perform math at a proficient level—a failure rate of 98 percent.

Missing the Point

Despite achievement levels in the low teens or single digits, many observers did not see failure.

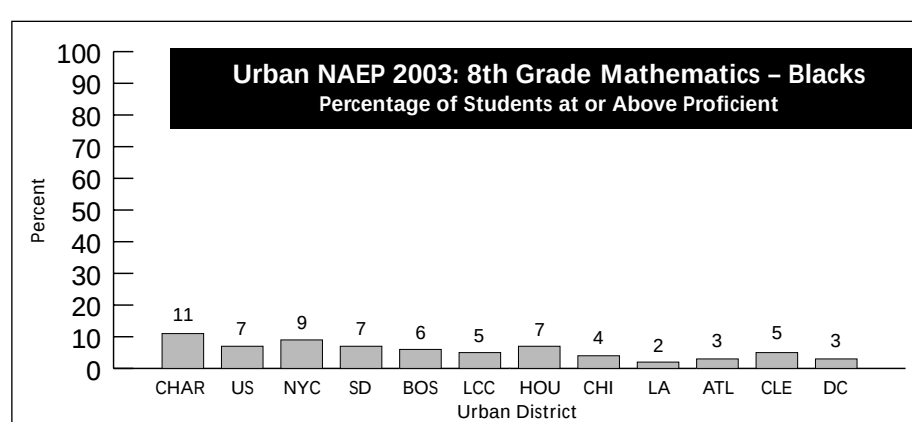
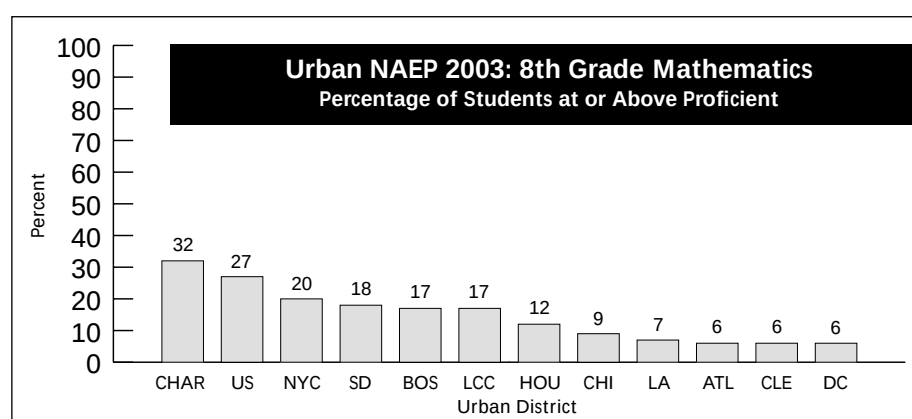
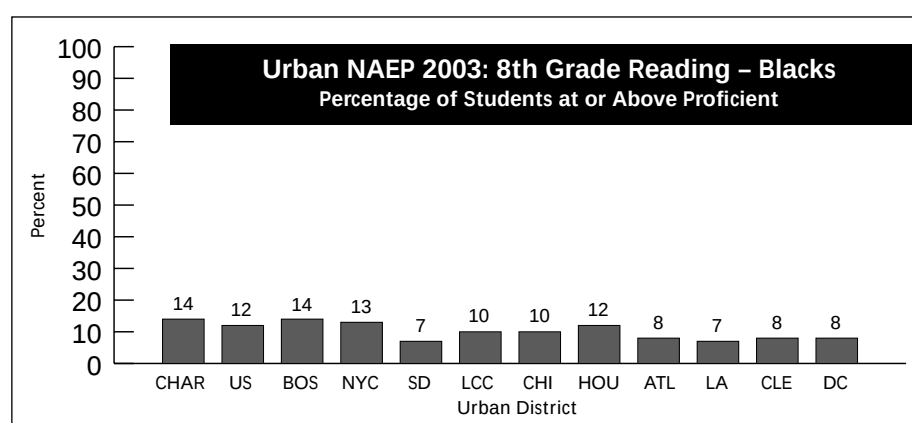
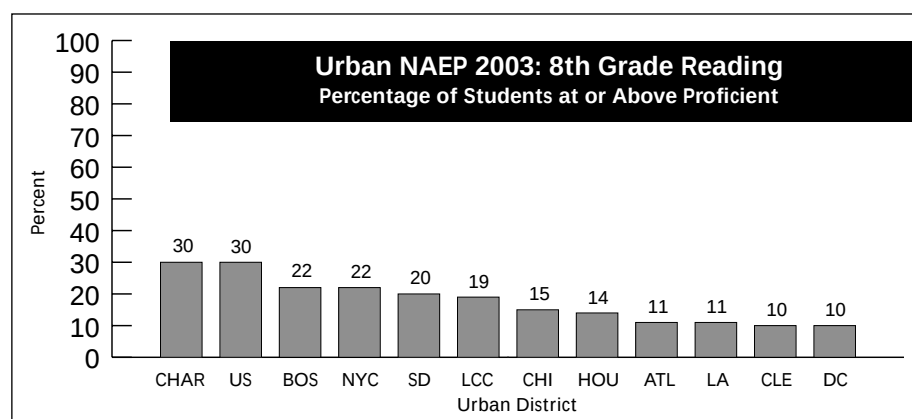
The editors of *The Christian Science Monitor* saw “a bit brighter” picture when scores were sorted by income and demographics. To New York City Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein, the results confirmed that “New York has the best system of public education of any major city in the United States.” The reaction of Darvin M. Winick, chairman of the National Assessment Governing Board, was remarkably upbeat.

“The perception that students in urban schools do less well than others and have poor academic performance is not supported by the 2003 NAEP results,” said Winick in a December 17 statement.

“Wrong,” said Chester E. Finn, Jr., president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. “Their academic performance, by and large, is horrendous.

“The fact is that huge numbers of urban—as well as non-urban—students in America today are *not* achieving anywhere near satisfactorily,” added Finn.

George A. Clowes is managing editor of School Reform News. His email address is clowes@heartland.org.



INTERNET INFO

Details of the National Assessment of Educational Progress's Trial Urban District Assessment are available online:

Reading: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/results2003/districtresults.asp>

Mathematics: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/mathematics/results2003/districtresults.asp>

Highlights for the Trial Urban District Assessment, which provide details of subgroup performance at the district level, are available online also:

Reading: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/dst2003/2004459.pdf>

Mathematics: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/dst2003/2004458.pdf>

Tests

Continued from page 1

signal as a wake-up call to focus their efforts on bringing their skills up to the required level.

The study was carried out by the Mass Insight Education and Research Institute and the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, with funding from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

The researchers found most of the 32 percent of students in Boston, Springfield, and Worcester who failed the state's Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam on their first try—in 10th grade—were more than a little surprised: Almost 90 percent of them had a C average or better at the time.

Fortunately, as described in "Seizing the Day: Massachusetts At-Risk High School Students Speak Out on Their Experiences at the Front Lines of Education Reform," the early warning motivated most of those students to take advantage of available "targeted, often individualized, remedial academic assistance," doubling the number of students taking advantage of such extra help from the previous year.

"In too many cases, [college students] needed help with knowledge and skills that should have been learned in the third or fourth grade."

By their senior year, 94 percent of these students from the class of 2003—the first required to pass the MCAS to graduate—received a diploma. The study found 82 percent of students who need extra help are now taking steps to get it; juniors are committing earlier to passing MCAS; and at-risk students are putting more effort into their school work because of MCAS.

"The reality of high stakes for high school students has led to increased effort and improved student behavior," the researchers concluded.

But the increased effort and success may occur almost in spite of the students' teachers, who, in addition to inflating grades, are sending mixed signals to the students about the test. Seventy-one percent of the students surveyed perceived negative attitudes towards the MCAS on the part of their teachers, even while 71 percent said their teachers helped push them towards remediation programs.

This disconnect between what high schools expect and will accept from their students, and what those students will actually need to succeed in college, poses a nationwide problem that seems to be worsening. It is the students who suffer most from this disconnect.

Losing Hope

For example, in Georgia, 40 percent of high school graduates who receive that state's Hope Scholarship are losing it after about a year because they can't keep up their good GPAs in college.



In Nevada, students who graduate with at least a B average can access a \$10,000 college scholarship, but nearly one-third of those who do find they have to take remedial courses once they arrive on campus. According to a recent analysis by the Nevada Policy Research Institute, 10,000 of the state's high school graduates were enrolled in remedial courses last year, and "in too many cases, they needed help with knowledge and skills that should have been learned in the third or fourth grade."

A recent report from the National Center for Education Statistics found the number of students taking at least one remedial course upon reaching college has risen to 35 percent from 28 percent five years ago. At the same time, the percentage of college-bound students carrying an A average has grown from 28 percent 15 years ago to 42 percent now, according to the College Board.

Grade inflation is an obvious culprit, but students taking easier courses—sometimes

because their schools do not offer anything more rigorous—may also be a factor. And in at least one city, a compounding, troubling factor has to do with principals improperly changing student grades from what their teachers submit. (See sidebar.)

Whatever the causes, American public high schools are clearly not adequately preparing students for later success in college. As the Manhattan Institute reported in the fall, only 32 percent of 18-year-olds in U.S. public high schools possess the minimum qualifications needed to attend a four-year college; for African-American students, the percentage of college-ready students falls to 20, while only 16 percent of Hispanic students are at least minimally prepared.

Kelly Amis Stewart is an education consultant and coauthor of Making it Count: A Guide to High-Impact Education Philanthropy with Chester E. Finn, Jr. Her email address is KAmisStewart@aol.com.

INTERNET INFO

The October 2003 report from the Mass Insight Education and Research Institute and the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, "Seizing the Day: Massachusetts At-Risk High School Students Speak Out on Their Experiences at the Front Lines of Education Reform," is available at <http://www.massinsight.org/pdf/Seizing%20the%20Day%20Report.pdf>.

The Fall 2003 report from the Nevada Policy Research Institute, "Wasting Time and Money: Why So Many Nevada Students Are Not Ready for College," by J.E. Stone, William L. Brown, and Richard P. Phelps, is available at <http://www.npri.org/mgraphs/remedial1.pdf>.

The November 2003 report from the National Center for Education Statistics, "Remedial Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions in Fall 2000," by Basmat Parsad, Laurie Lewis, and

Bernard Greene, is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004010.pdf>.

The December 9, 2003 news release from the District of Columbia Public Schools, "DC Public Schools to Implement Recommendations from Review of Senior High School Student Records Reports," is available at <http://www.k12.dc.us/dcps/dcpsnews/newsrelease/News%20Release%20Dec%209.pdf>.

A first-of-its-kind report on how well state standards match the knowledge and skills required for college success is available from the University of Oregon, "Mixed Messages: What State High School Tests Communicate About Student Readiness for College," by David Conley. A news release and the report are available at <http://cepr.uoregon.edu/MixedMessages/index.asp>.

In DC Schools, Grade-Tampering "May Have Occurred Undetected"

Before he resigned in late 2003, Washington, DC Superintendent Paul Vance ordered a review of high school records after teachers from one local high school complained the grades they had given to students—grades that might have kept some students from graduating—had been raised without their knowledge.

The report, conducted by accounting firm Gardiner, Kamy & Associates, P.C., found student records were "inconsistent, inaccurate, and unreliable" at all of DC's 16 public high schools. The auditors concluded grade-tampering might be rampant—but so many records were missing it was difficult to determine the magnitude of the fraud.

As the *Washington Post* reported, "in a number of cases, there were disparities between the grades shown on the teachers' forms and the grades printed on students' report cards and listed on the transcripts sent to colleges."

At one school, located in the northwest region of the nation's capital, reviewers found that about half of their sample of 59 student files was missing teachers' grading sheets. In more than one-third of those that did have complete files, grades recorded in the students' records were higher than those actually given by their teachers.

A December 9 news release from District of Columbia Public Schools announced public school officials "planned to address the findings" and had "indicated their intention to expeditiously implement the recommendations," which included "principal orientation and training" and "system-wide training for records maintenance staff."

The news release reported the investigative team found no overall consistency across the District: Each DC school had different policies and procedures with respect to student grades and maintenance of student records.

The team also found "problems in OIT (the Office of Information Technology) with regards to tracking student grades, student records were disorganized, and conditions existed where tampering with student grades may have occurred undetected."

However, the news release concluded, "there is no evidence of deliberate tampering."

—K.A.S.

INTERNET INFO

The December 9, 2003 news release from the District of Columbia Public Schools, "DC Public Schools to Implement Recommendations from Review of Senior High School Student Records Reports," is available at <http://www.k12.dc.us/dcps/dcpsnews/newsrelease/News%20Release%20Dec%209.pdf>.

Unremediated Grammar

Cover letters reveal college graduates still unprepared

by Bob Killian

Attached to every résumé we get at our advertising agency is a cover letter. Despite the fact that these letters are usually written by college graduates or seniors in college, they regularly feature some of the most labored prose ever set to paper. An error-free letter is now so rare that the minimal care required to send a letter with zero defects, combined with a few crisply written simple declarative sentences, will, alone, guarantee a respectful reading of a résumé.

Listed below are examples of the most-tortured sentences gleaned from actual cover letters we have received, plus one request for information.

"I expect the position to pay commensurate to that of its value, as well as to the performance completed."

"It is my desire to develop and generate the revolving scheme to filter to the consuming public in."

"Skills: Microst word, excel, and power point. Mulitaks person, public speaking, and surveying."

"Chairwomen of Studnts Teaching Awareness and Responsibility organization"

"Objective: To work in a challenging environment that allows me to use my imaginatiion ..."

"Education: _____ Collage, B.A. expected, June 2003."

"Who's better to spew out incite, than a college senior...?"

"Hi! My name is _____, and I am a senior at _____ University. For my one Advertising class we are select and present an agency, within our groups, to the class in which we find interesting ... Such information that I would need is

1) How your departments are broken down?

2) Who is the executives and how moving up the ladder is achieved?"

"[My] proven record of successful brand building ... demonstrate[s] my ability to perform in a fast paced environment. Originally from Vietnam, I also offer expertise in the following areas:

- Asian cuisine: I deliver Nem, in-box or out-of-the-box,

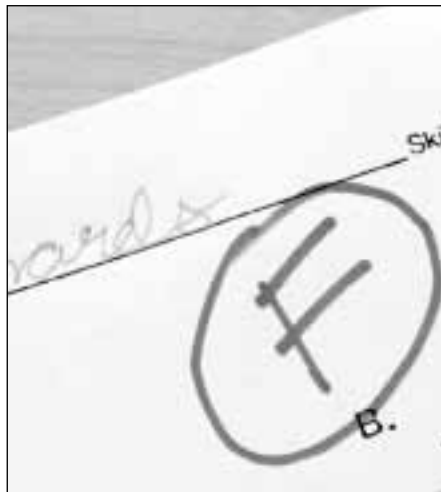
- Traditional massage: I satisfy Client above their expectation,

- Karaoke singing: but also a lot of listening, listening and listening to Client.

Would you like to taste any of those, please feel free to contact me on my email address mentioned above."

"I am a motivated, self-igniting person..."

"I would like to start learning from a pronoun company and I feel as if Killian & Co. Advertising will give me the oppor-



tunity I am looking for."

"I need real world experience and after reviewing your web site I get the impressing that your company believes in maintain a lax work environment while efficiently meeting the needs of it's customers (right?)."

When we suggested to this last applicant that he get some remedial help with his writing, since he had an error in every single sentence of his lengthy letter, he penned an angry reply that included the following:

"If your company takes such a serious position towards proper grammar then I think you guys are in the wrong profession ...I am not precisely sure why you choose to take such a stance perhaps because you have nothing better to do, or maybe because you have personal insecurities that seep out and you feel the need to degrade or target others based on stupid little infractions to make yourself feel better ... (I reread it before sending it and it states my point clearly and unless you lack the mental capacity to make out the meaning without having exact and precise grammar maybe you should seek a new proffsion, I hear this country lacks a lot of grammar school teachers perhaps that would be a better fit for you) In conclusion I have indeed made many mistakes in this e-mail many on purpose and many accidentally I did not have the time nor the patientce to deal with it I will leave the grammer checking to the professionals such as yourself."

Bob Killian is president of Killian Advertising in Chicago. His email address is bob@killianadvertising.com.

© 2002, Killian & Company Advertising

INTERNET INFO

Further examples of cover letter prose may be found in "Cover Letters from Hell" at the Web site of Killian Advertising at <http://www.killianadvertising.com/coverletters.html>.

Language Defenders Come Under Friendly Fire

Although Bob Killian's "Cover Letters from Hell" quotes one job applicant's use of "accidentally" as an obvious example of a misspelled word, his defense of language standards is coming under friendly fire from publishers of a new slang-filled edition of the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. If enough people use—or misuse—"accidentally," it may well find a place in a future edition.

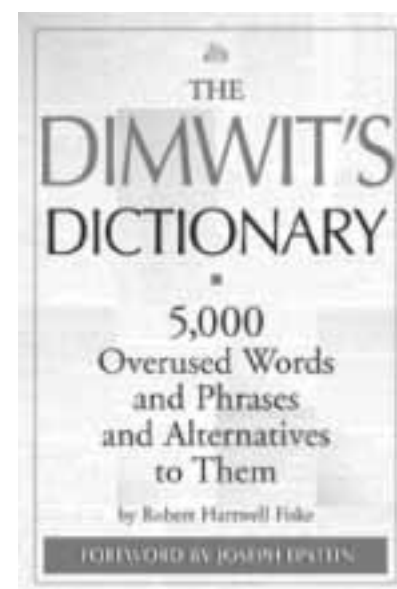
The latest edition of the dictionary, according to a recent review by Robert Hartwell Fiske in *The Weekly Standard*, "actually promotes misuse of the English language" by including misspellings and mistaken usage as valid. Dictionaries are "no longer to be trusted," says Fiske, providing the following examples of "inexcusably shoddy dictionary-making":

- The spelling "accidently" is as valid as "accidentally";
- The verb "predominate" is also an adjective meaning "predominant";
- "Enormity" means the same as "enormousness";
- "Infer" means the same as "imply";
- "Peruse" means not only to examine carefully but to read over in a casual manner.

Fiske, editor and publisher of *The Vocabula Review*, is the author of *The Dimwit's Dictionary: 5,000*

Overused Words and Phrases and Alternatives to Them. Whereas a witticism is a clever remark or phrase, a "dimwitticism" is the converse: a worn-out word or phrase, such as "delicate balance" and "a new ballgame."

—G.C.



INTERNET INFO

The Vocabula Review is available online at <http://www.vocabula.com>.

Walberg Nominated to National Education Board

Herbert J. Walberg, chairman of The Heartland Institute, publisher of *School Reform News*, has been nominated by President George W. Bush to a three-year term on the National Board for Education Sciences.

The board, established by the Education Sciences Reform Act in 2002, is charged with overseeing the work of the Institute of Education Sciences, which was established to develop and coordinate high-quality research, gather statistics, evaluate programs, and disseminate information.

Walberg was research professor of psychology and education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He also has held research posts at Educational Testing Service and the University of Wisconsin, and has taught at Harvard University. He served as an advisor to former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett

and is frequently called to testify in federal courts on educational matters.

The author of numerous articles in scholarly journals, Walberg also has written or edited more than 30 books. His latest book, coauthored with Heartland President Joseph L. Bast, is *Education and Capitalism*.

Also nominated to the National Board were Eric A. Hanushek, the Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow in Education at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, and Caroline Hoxby, professor of economics at Harvard University and director of the Economics in Education program at the National Bureau of Economic Research. All three nominees are members of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education.

Other nominees include mathematics researcher R. James Milgram and reading researchers Sally E. Shaywitz and Joseph K. Torgesen. The nominations were announced by the White House on November 19.

—G.C.

ALEC

Continued from page 1

expenditures, and resources, as well as demographic information, for all 50 states and the District of Columbia using data from the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, the College Board, the Census Bureau, ACT, Inc., and the National Education Association.

Student Performance

The report ranks states according to the performance of their students on the 2002 Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) or the ACT assessment and the 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) eighth-grade reading assessment. The top three states or jurisdictions were Wisconsin, Minnesota, and

The stagnation in student achievement over the past two decades took place during a period that also saw massive increases in spending, a rise in teacher salaries, and a reduction of the student-teacher ratio. From 1980 to 2000, per-pupil expenditures grew from \$4,810 to \$7,079. During the same period, the pupil-teacher ratio dropped from 19-1 to 16-1. Reviewing these data, the authors conclude there is no correlation between spending and achievement, or between education inputs and education outputs.

For example, of the states ALEC ranked highest—Washington, Iowa, and Wisconsin:

- Iowa and Wisconsin receive less money from the federal government than most states;
- Washington and Iowa rank in the bottom half of states on per-pupil spending;
- Iowa ranks in the lower half on teacher salaries.

While Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa are the top-ranking states on the ACT test, they are ranked 21st, 25th, and 15th respectively on pupil-teacher ratios.

"Data compiled by this year's Report Card belies any notion that these policy makers can spend their way out of the public school doldrums," the authors conclude. "No combination or magnitude of public investments has improved average student scores on standardized tests. ... It is time to at least examine other alternatives."

Expanding Choices

One alternative increasingly being embraced by lawmakers and policymakers is to enhance parental choice through charter schools, tuition vouchers, and tuition tax credits or deductions. Those options provide the parents of public school children with the purchasing power necessary to choose the best schools for their children.

The ALEC report includes information on different parental choice options, including detailed information on charter school laws.

"[W]hat money cannot buy in our public schools, parental choice and inter-school competition may," the authors write. "There is rapidly accumulating evidence that student productivity goes up where traditional public schools must compete for enrollment with charter schools or voucher and scholarship programs that empower parents to 'shop' for the best education for their children."

Krista Kafer is senior policy analyst for education at The Heritage Foundation. Her email address is krista.kafer@heritage.org.

Iowa. The bottom three were Louisiana, Mississippi, and the District of Columbia.

States with the largest increases in average composite SAT scores from 2001 to 2002 were North Dakota, Alaska, Colorado, and Montana. Wyoming and Utah experienced the largest declines.

Minnesota, Montana, Kansas, and Maine had the highest scores on the 2000 NAEP mathematics test, while Mississippi, Louisiana, and New Mexico had the lowest.

Nationwide, the 2002 NAEP fourth-grade reading assessment results were six points higher than on the 2000 test. However, the 2002 results were only two points higher than when the test was first administered in 1992. Also, scores for eighth graders stagnated while scores for twelfth graders declined.

Education Expenditures

States with the highest per-pupil expenditures in the 2000-2001 school year were New Jersey (\$10,787), the District of Columbia (\$10,252), Connecticut (\$10,135), and New York (\$9,935). The states that spent the least were Utah (\$4,372), Arizona (\$4,968), Arkansas (\$5,269), Mississippi (\$5,283), and Idaho (\$5,386).

During the same year, average teacher salaries were the highest in New Jersey (\$53,281), Connecticut (\$52,100), and New York (\$50,920). Average teacher salaries were the lowest in South Dakota (\$30,265) and North Dakota (\$30,891).

Lack of Correlation

Enlow Named Executive Director of Friedman Foundation

Robert C. Enlow, executive vice president for programs and development for the Milton & Rose D. Friedman Foundation Inc., has been named executive director of the foundation. His new responsibilities include expanded management of the foundation's programming, communication, and development efforts, as well as oversight of various school choice efforts currently underway in 17 states.

The foundation, called "the nation's leading advocate of vouchers" by the *Wall Street Journal*, was established by Nobel laureate Dr. Milton Friedman and his wife Dr. Rose D. Friedman in 1996 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the public about the role competition plays in achieving real K-12 education reform. Enlow will continue working directly with the Friedmans to ensure the foundation's progress.

"The Friedman Foundation is deeply committed to the proposition that all parents—regardless of creed, color, or economic circumstance—should have equal access to educational options for children," said Enlow. "All parents want the best and deserve the best education

for their children."

Announcing the promotion on December 8, the foundation's president and CEO, Gordon St. Angelo, said the move would expand Enlow's influence within the local and school choice communities.

Before joining the newly created foundation in 1996, Enlow lived in London, England, where he served as a deputy day center manager, social worker, and volunteer coordinator for St. Botolph's Project, a homeless assistance organization. He also attended Oxford University, pursuing a graduate degree in theology. A native of Evansville, Indiana, Enlow currently resides in Indianapolis with his wife, Wendy, and their two children, Jefferson and Charles.

—G.C.

INTERNET INFO

For more information visit the foundation's Web site at <http://www.friedmanfoundation.org>.

You've got one period to teach them about the federal budget.



Go.

The war on terrorism. The federal budget. The economy. Public policy concerns—and the terms of those debates—change so quickly nowadays, even the latest texts seem dated.

But that's not the case with *Issues 2002*, a policy guide book from The Heritage Foundation that easily can help you explain the current issues in your history, civics or political science classes.

And *Issues 2002* won't be old news after you get the book. With the new Internet edition of *Issues 2002* you can get the latest studies, breaking news and talking points on the issues from your classroom pc or laptop.

www.heritage.org/issues2002

Try *Issues 2002*. You'll be surprised what your students—and you—can learn.

INTERNET INFO

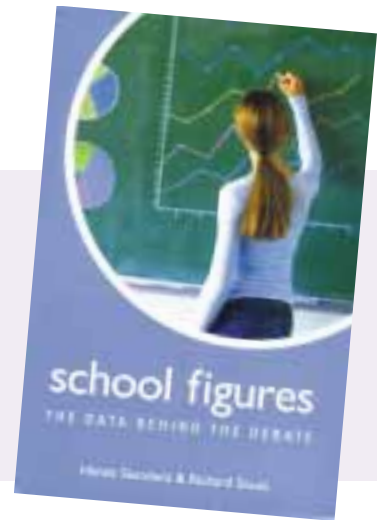
The American Legislative Exchange Council's November 2003 *Report Card on American Education: A State-by-State Analysis, 1980-2002*, by Jack R. Stevens and Rea S. Hederman, Jr., is available online at <http://www.alec.org/meSWFiles/pdf/2003%20Report%20Card%20on%20American%20Education.pdf>.

School Figures Throws Light on Reform Issues

School Figures: The Data behind the Debate

by Hanna Skandera
and Richard Sousa

Hoover Institution Press, 2003,
\$15.00 paperback, 342 pages
ISBN: 0-8179-2822-7



review by George A. Clowes

This new book from Hoover Institution scholars Hanna Skandera and Richard Sousa is packed with informative data tables and graphs that are organized to support some 39 propositions about U.S. K-12 education. The propositions are grouped into six different issue areas: schools, teachers, achievement, expenditures, school reform, and students and their families.

Readers will find some of the propositions surprising, but the supporting data and graphs allow them to make up their own minds about the issues covered in the book. The book is well worth its modest \$15 price just to have so much well-organized education data readily available, with Web links to many original sources.

School Figures: The Data behind the Debate should be widely read by policymakers and interested parents, first to make them more conscious of the assumptions they are making when they advocate specific policy changes; and second, to help them become better-informed about K-12 education in general—about demographics, costs, student testing and

achievement, alternative education, and public school reform endeavors.

“[P]articipants in discussions about students and their educational performance and environment cannot enter into a sound debate without first stipulating the facts,” write the authors. “In this volume, we hope to establish the baseline for discussion and debate by providing relevant data in the form of words, graphs, and tables.”

Assumptions Drive Reform Proposals

As in other fields, recommendations for policy changes in the public education system are founded on a series of underlying assumptions about conditions in the system and the way the system responds to changes in the amount and quality of resources made available to it. For example, the call for higher levels of per-pupil spending is based on the assumption that spending more money on education will result in improved student performance.

Other commonly held assumptions about conditions in the public education system and how it works are:

- There is a perennial shortage of teachers.
- Teacher certification is a guarantee of teacher quality.

■ Across-the-board salary increases for teachers will result in improved student achievement.

■ Reducing class sizes will result in improved student achievement.

■ Federal education expenditures have improved student achievement, particularly in the case of low-income children.

■ Public schools are locally controlled.

But, as Ira Gershwin wrote so lyrically in *Porgy and Bess*, “It ain’t necessarily so.”

“In some cases, the facts fully support the proposition,” write Skandera and Sousa. “[I]n other cases, our factual finding may startle the reader—the accepted norm may not be factual and, hence, should not be accepted.”

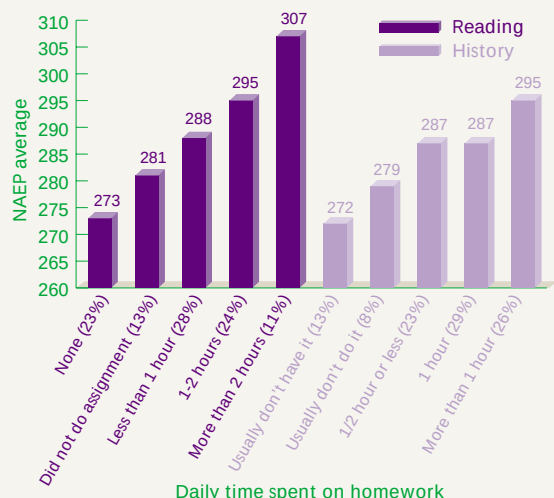
Skandera and Sousa are research fellows at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, where Sousa also is senior associate director. Early versions of a few of their propositions appeared in *School Reform News* in 2002.

George A. Clowes is managing editor of *School Reform News*. His email address is clowes@heartland.org.

Proposition: Homework Provides Clear Results for All Students and Compelling Results for High School Students

Experts disagree on the value of homework, but a strong correlation is apparent between scores in National Assessment of Educational Progress tests and the amount of time spent doing homework.

Homework and NAEP Reading and History Scores
17-Year-Olds or Twelfth-Graders, 1996

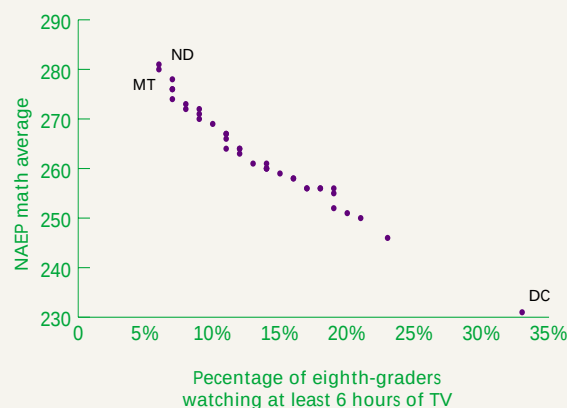


Sources: Thomas D. Snyder, ed., *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1999 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000), table 114, p. 132; U.S. Department of Education, *The Condition of Education*, 1996, Supplemental table 18-3, available at <http://nces.gov/pubsoled/ce96/c9618d03.html>

Proposition: Television Viewing Is a Home-based Habit That Affects Educational Achievement

The more hours a student spends watching television each night, the less time is available not only for homework, studying, or reading but also for sleeping. A 1990 state-by-state assessment of math proficiency showed decreased math proficiency with increased television viewing.

Television Viewing and Math Proficiency
By State, Eighth Grade, 1990

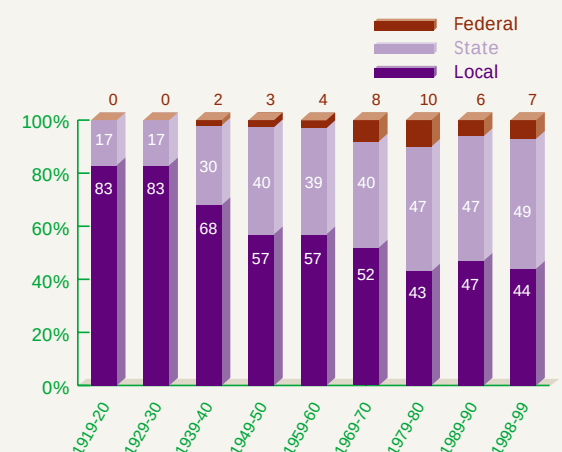


Source: Educational Testing Service, *America's Smallest School: The Family* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, Policy Information Center, Educational Testing Service Network, 1999), available online at <http://www.ets.org/research/pic/ssfig12.html>

Proposition: Public Schools at One Time Were Locally Controlled; This Is Changing. Funding Provides One Piece of Evidence.

Before the New Deal era, public schools were locally funded and controlled, with 83 percent of funding raised locally. Now, that local portion has shrunk to just 44 percent, with the state providing the lion's share of school funding and shifting the locus of control accordingly.

Public School Funding Sources
1919-20—1998-99



Sources: Thomas D. Snyder, ed., *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2001 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2002), table 157, p. 178.

The Friedman Report

The Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization established in 1996 by Milton and Rose Friedman. The origins of the foundation lie in the Friedmans' long-standing concern about the serious deficiencies in America's elementary and secondary public schools. The best way to improve the quality of education, they believe, is to enable all parents to have a truly free choice of the schools their children attend. The Friedman Foundation works to build upon this vision, clarify its meaning to the general public, and amplify the national call for true education reform through school choice. Contact us at <http://www.friedmanfoundation.org> for more information.

The Milton & Rose D. Friedman Foundation
One American Square #1760
Indianapolis, IN 46282

Doug Holmes: Education Excellence Utah

Striking at the Root

"For every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil, there is one striking at the root."

—Henry David Thoreau

by Robert Fanger

Doug Holmes of Farmington, Utah, has taken Thoreau's words as his motto in his fight to ensure a better education for his children—all six of them. His oldest child is a senior in high school.

"Unless parents are allowed to have responsibility for the education of their children and thus break the ridiculous education establishment monopoly, our economy, our civil society, and our liberty are at risk," said Holmes. For him, the K-12 education monopoly is clearly a root issue.

Three years ago, after Holmes moved to Utah, he formed Education Excellence Utah with Jordan Clements, founder and chairman of Children First Utah. The philosophy of the group is simple: Improve education in Utah through the introduction of meaningful parental choice.

Education Excellence Utah (<http://www.edexutah.org>) is a partner with the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation to help promote school choice in Utah. Their joint efforts in educating the public about school choice were in evidence in 2003 when the Utah legislature almost passed a comprehensive universal tuition tax credit program. The tax credit is again expected to be a topic for legislators in the 2004 session.

Tuition tax credits will allow parents who send their children to a private school to claim a credit on their taxes. Thus, parents are allowed more choice in where their child receives an education—an idea Holmes is very familiar with. Although all his children currently attend public schools, they also have attended charter schools and have been home educated.

"We have had our children in school in four different states—Colorado, Washington, Massachusetts,



and Utah," Holmes said. "By far our best experience was in Colorado in a Core Knowledge-based charter school."

After the experience in Colorado, Holmes thought school choice in Utah would be an easy sell.

"When coming to Utah, I thought it was a conservative state that valued individual responsibility and

choice. I believed we could easily persuade the public on the benefits of educational choice and Utah could provide a model of the benefits of choice to other states."

He is quick to concede he may have been somewhat naive, but it hasn't stopped him from continuing to strike at the root that deprives parents of the responsibility for educating their children.

"The importance of an educated populace to our way of life cannot be overstated," contended Holmes. "The current guardians of that core American value have failed miserably in their stewardship, as they have put control and personal ego ahead of the children of America."

While encouraged by the progress of school choice in Utah and across the country, Holmes believes school choice advocates have to be more aggressive to achieve a major breakthrough. He views two areas as posing the most difficult challenges.

First, there is the "tyranny of the status quo," which includes underestimating the power of entrenched bureaucrats and special interest groups who fight tooth and nail to defend the existing system. Second, too many parents in Utah passively accept mediocrity in the education of their children.

But Holmes also thinks the power of the education establishment will ultimately overreach itself.

"I see the education establishment continue to expose itself and its desire for control above all else," said Holmes. "As it does, more and more people recognize the need for major change."

As more Utahns are made aware of the benefits of choice and the school choice movement picks up momentum, Holmes anticipates there will be many more, not just one, striking at the root.

Robert Fanger is the media relations and communications associate with the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation in Indianapolis, Indiana. His email address is Robert@FriedmanFoundation.org.

School Choice Roundup

by Robert Fanger

COLORADO

Voucher Supporters Run Radio Ad Campaign

Even though a Denver district judge has ruled the Colorado voucher program unconstitutional, radio ads have asked parents to continue signing up for the program. It had been expected to begin in the fall of 2004 with some 3,300 students and expand to 20,000 by 2007.

"Families living in neighborhoods with failing schools are holding out hope that they can continue with the [voucher] process," Jorge Amaya of the Colorado Alliance for Reform in Education told the *Rocky Mountain News*. The Alliance is running the ads.

"We're going to send a message to the public school system that, if these children are going to be held hostage, they're not going to be good hostages," said Amaya.

The Alliance aired two radio spots during December on at least 13 stations from Greeley to Pueblo, one in English and the other in Spanish. Amaya told the *Rocky Mountain News* the ads cost about \$25,000 to air.

Alliance outreach also includes going door-to-door in poor neighborhoods, offering assistance with filling out the applications.

Rocky Mountain News
December 12, 2003

DELAWARE

Diocese Considers State-Approved Testing System

Prompted by a new law that has cut off thousands of teachers in Delaware's private schools from gaining or maintaining certification, the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington is discussing with state education officials the possibility of creating a testing and accountability system for private school students similar to the one established for the state's public school students.

Although state certification is not a requirement for teaching in private schools in Delaware, many educators in fact have gained their licensure and certification while teaching in the state's private schools. Also, certified teachers and administrators in the state's private schools have kept up their certification to maintain their professional standing and to make it easier to move between public and private schools. A new law ended all that.

When Delaware established its school accountability law three years ago, the state Department of Education and public school teachers developed a new teacher licensing, certification, and re-certification procedure that was dependent in part on student performance but also applied only to public schools. As a result, the state was unable to license and certify diocesan teachers.

"The young teachers who are with us now, who really value that license, have been calling frantically asking about certification," Catherine Weaver, assistant superintendent of education for the diocese, told *The News Journal*. She estimated 40 percent of diocesan teachers lack state certification under the new rules.

At the request of the diocese, state lawmakers last summer passed a bill to allow private schools to develop state-approved testing and accountability systems for teacher certification. Weaver said she hopes an accountability system could be set up within about 18 months.

The Wilmington News Journal
December 12, 2003

FLORIDA

Judge Orders Another \$2 Million Set Aside for Vouchers

The Florida Department of Education must post an additional \$2 million bond to continue implementation of the Sunshine State's original school voucher program, a judge ruled in November.

Circuit Judge Kevin Davey had ruled in August 2002 that the program violates the state constitution by allowing tax dollars to be spent on religious institutions. However, he allowed the state to continue issuing vouchers as long as enough money was set aside to cover the lost revenue public schools would incur during the appeal from losing students to private schools. If his ruling was eventually upheld, those funds would be used to reimburse the public schools.

The state had put aside \$2.5 million in 2002, \$400,000 more than was spent on vouchers, and had added another \$350,000 in 2003. Voucher opponents claimed that was not enough.

The state argued Davey had no authority to set the condition and, besides, public schools weren't losing money. In fact, the average voucher is about \$4,300, or \$1,000 less than per-pupil state spending in public schools.

"It costs the school district considerably more to educate a student than the money that it is losing," lawyer Barry Richard argued for the state.

The voucher case is still pending before the First Circuit Court of Appeal.

Ocala Star-Banner
November 11, 2003

KANSAS

Voucher Advocate O'Connor Will Run for Re-Election

On December 2, incumbent Kansas Sen. Kay O'Connor (R-Olathe) announced her candidacy for the District 9 Senate seat, which includes De Soto, Edgerton, Lenexa, and part of Olathe.

O'Connor, 62, who was first elected to the Senate in 2000, is executive director of Parents in Control, an organization that has a nonprofit educational foundation to educate parents about school choice and a political action committee to advocate for school vouchers.

State Rep. Rob Boyer (R-Olathe) has announced he will challenge O'Connor in the primary. Boyer, 35, has said economic development and public education have been and will continue to be his top priorities.

The primary will be held on August 3.
Kansas City Star
December 6, 2003
Parents In Control
<http://www.parentsincontrol.org>

KENTUCKY

Privately Funded Voucher Program Sees Demand Grow

The Louisville School Choice Scholarship program has awarded 1,100 three-year scholarships worth a total of \$3 million since its inception in 1998. The scholarships are for up to 60 percent of tuition up to \$1,000 a year.

Targeting low-income children, the program has an annual waiting list of 400 students but believes that number could easily be eclipsed if parents took their children out of schools classed as low-performing by the No Child Left Behind Act.

"Our demand grows every year," School Choice Scholarships Director Diane Cowne told The Associated Press. "And that may increase."

Supporters say the popularity of the program speaks volumes. They dismiss criticism that Choice Scholarships hurt public schools, arguing it is only competition that will make public schools better, not more money.

Former Rep. Bob Heleringer (R-Louisville) sponsored legislation in 1998 and 2000 that would have provided \$500 tax credits to families who send their children to private schools. Both efforts were unsuccessful.

Lexington Herald-Leader
December 2, 2003

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Voucher Bill Sent to Study Committee

A bill to establish a school voucher system in New Hampshire was sent to an interim study committee by the House Education Committee by a vote of 16-1 on November 18, 2003.

House Bill 754 will have to be reintroduced for the 2005 session since it is unlikely to resurface in the January 2004 session, according to *The Union Leader*.

HB 754 would establish an education certificate program to allow parental choice in the selection of schools for their children. At current aid levels, parents could receive nearly \$2,700 in public funds for use toward tuition at a private secular or religious school.

"It's a good bill, an important bill ... but I do concur that additional work can be done, and will be done," bill cosponsor Rep. John Alger (R-Rumney) told *The Union Leader*.

Opponents raised questions in November because the original bill stated that a school district would make out the voucher to both the parents and the private school, possibly violating a state law prohibiting public money from going to religious schools.

However, Alger and other bill sponsors say the vouchers do not violate that prohibition since the choice is left up to the parents. This parental choice was the key element in the U.S. Supreme Court finding that vouchers in Cleveland did not violate the U.S. Constitution.

"I know the school boards are nervous. Everyone is nervous, but it seems like a sensible thing to do, to me," Alger told *The Union Leader*. "If they're worried about it being unconstitutional, let's get this into law, then let them take it to court and find out."

The Union Leader
November 10, 2003
November 19, 2003

NEW MEXICO

Forum Highlights Options for Parents

Nearly 180 participants learned about options in education at the Albuquerque Partnership's Sixth Annual Community Education Forum on November 12, 2003, which was held in conjunction with Educate New Mexico's school fair. The forum included representatives from more than 27 area schools.

"The whole mission behind the forum was to bring community members from Albuquerque's South

Valley together to talk about issues in education," Educate New Mexico Executive Director Troy Williamson told the *Albuquerque Journal*. "Closing the gap is the biggest challenge, it seems, for parents in the South Valley.

"We wanted to give low-income families a way to find out about school choices and how our organization helps raise money to give them opportunities to go to the best school for them," he said.

Educate New Mexico is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and helping to finance excellent academic opportunities for students from low-income families.

The event provides an opportunity for all types of schools—public and private—to showcase their educational offerings in an effort to recruit students.

Albuquerque Journal
November 14, 2003

SOUTH CAROLINA

Sanford Expected to Offer School Choice Proposal

A school choice plan that provides more educational choices to students in low-performing schools is expected to be offered soon by South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford, according to Manhattan Institute researchers Jay Greene and Marcus Winters.

Debate on vouchers in South Carolina has focused not so much on the benefits to voucher students who leave failing public schools—which few question—but rather on the effect school choice will have on the students who are left behind in public schools. However, as Greene and Winters point out from a study of Florida's voucher program, public school students who were eligible for vouchers but did not use them made significantly larger test-score gains than other public school students throughout the state.

"In Florida, vouchers have provided public schools with powerful incentives to improve," say the researchers. "If schools don't improve, they stand to lose students—and the funding they generate—to other schools."

Not only have similar results been found in studies of other voucher programs, say the researchers, "we know of no study that shows vouchers harm public school achievement."

Charleston Post and Courier
December 8, 2003

VIRGINIA

Voucher Supporter Re-elected to Office

Incumbent Virginia Delegate William R. Janis (R-Henrico) won decisively with 66 percent of the vote on November 4, 2003. Janis, who received endorsements from Senators John W. Warner and George Allen, was confronted by his opponent, businessman Hunter H. McGuire III, on the issue of vouchers.

Janis, who serves as a part-time teacher at a parochial school in Virginia, said he would consider vouchers and received the endorsement of a political committee pushing for school choice.

McGuire said Janis' support of school vouchers would take \$280 million away from public education.

Richmond Times-Dispatch
November 2, 2003
November 5, 2003

The Little School That Could

by David W. Kirkpatrick

The transformation of Vaughn Elementary School in Los Angeles began on July 1, 1993, when teachers overwhelmingly voted for change and the facility became, in the words of its principal, Yvonne Chan, "the first independent, urban conversion charter school in the state of California and in the nation."

The building did not change, nor did the principal, students, or teachers. Yet the school became a top academic performer.

"It's not the kids who have changed," said Chan, "it's the adults who have changed. It's a different culture."

Decades-Long Struggle

Before the change, Vaughn Elementary School was a conventional K-6 inner-city school in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Nearly 95 percent of its 1,200 students were Hispanic, 80 percent were Spanish-speaking English learners, 5 percent were African-American, and a handful were Asian. More than 97 percent were entitled to free or reduced lunches.

The school operated on a multi-track year-round basis with only two-thirds of the students attending at any given time. The area was so poor that many residents were reported to live in backyard trailers or even garages.

**"It's not the kids who have changed,
it's the adults who have changed.
It's a different culture."**

YVONNE CHAN

VAUGHN NEXT CENTURY LEARNING CENTER

Few schools could match Vaughn's serious problems or dismal results. For 40 years, since 1951, the school was listed as one of the worst in the district. Its test scores were in single digits, below the 10th percentile. Absenteeism was high, at any given time as many as 12 percent of the students were suspended, student fights were a daily occurrence, classrooms were regularly vandalized, and new computers were stolen before they could be unpacked.

About a dozen of the school's 39 teachers left every year, with the result that 70 percent of the teachers had less than three years' experience. A custodian was robbed and beaten at gun point, and one morning there was a dead body on the sidewalk in front of the school. Relations within the school and with the community were so bad in 1990 that the principal left in March after receiving repeated death threats. His successor, Chan, was appointed in May and assigned three campus aides for security reasons.

Transformation Begins

For three years the struggle continued. Then, after the July 1 vote in 1993, a transformation began, with the school building symbolically renamed the Vaughn Next Century Learning Center with the slogan "The Little School That Could."

The security personnel were dismissed as Chan successfully sought to restore community relations. When the assistant principal and eight other employees left, the remaining staff took on extra duties rather than replace them. Achievement and attendance rates rose. Chan finished the school year with more than a \$1,000,000 surplus.

The surplus made it possible to buy two houses—one a "crack" house—that adjoined school property. They were torn down and replaced by a 14-room learning center. The construction was completed within 10 months, far less time than would have been possible if Vaughn had been a regular district school. An insistence that workers from the community be employed on the project was but one of

the initiatives to win support from the public as the school became a full-service community based school.

Just two years later, in 1995, Vaughn received a California Distinguished Schools Award. In 1996 it was selected for a National Blue Ribbon Schools Award. The school has continued to achieve well academically and is a top-ranked school on the state's Academic Performance Index. Student attendance as of June 2002 was 97.73 percent and at times has exceeded 99 percent.

In 1995, Vaughn dropped the multi-track schedule and established a 200 school day year—the only Los Angeles school to do so. Other changes include:

1993 — the addition of 22 teaching stations;

1994 — adding six portable classrooms and reducing class size to 27 in all grades;

1995 — building 14 new classrooms and reducing class size to 20 in grades K-3;

1999 — building a community library, clinic, museum, multimedia lab science center, professional development center, 10 demonstration classrooms, and reducing class size to 20 in every grade;

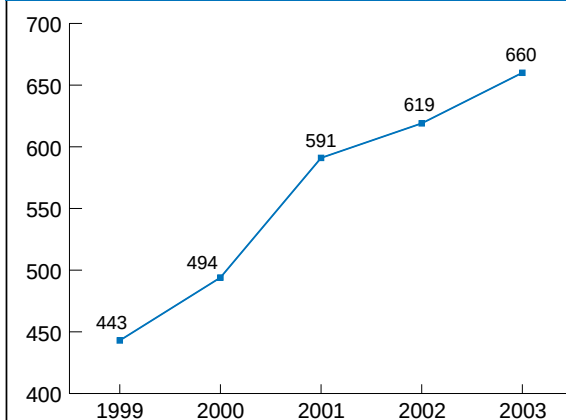
2000 — buying land for a 650-seat center for pre-K to first grade students and a campus for expansion into grades 6, 7 and 8.

It was decided to add grades because too many of Vaughn's now-successful students were running into difficulties as they moved to higher grades in conventional schools within the district. In 2001 another site was purchased to build a 500-student high school academy, scheduled to open in July 2005. When that occurs, Vaughn will have 2,400 students on four 600-student campuses within a three-block radius.

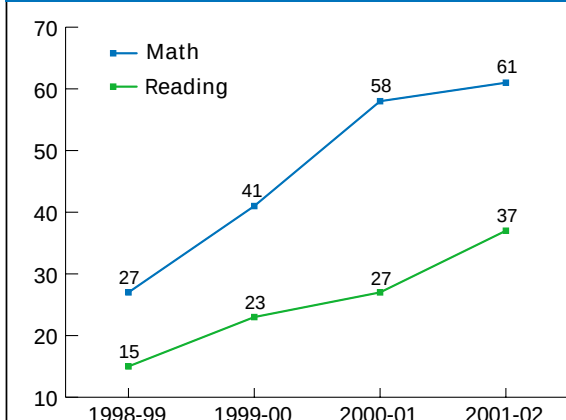
Principal Chan has testified at hearings in more than 32 states, a Congressional hearing on school reform has been held at the school, and the school has been noted in the national media. Even so, Vaughn's story remains one that more people in the public school establishment need to know.

David W. Kirkpatrick is a senior education fellow with the U.S. Freedom Foundation. His email address is kirkdw@aol.com.

Academic Learning Index
Vaughn Next Century Learning Center



Selected SAT-9 Scores for Second Grade Students
Vaughn Next Century Learning Center



INTERNET INFO

Further details of the changes that took place in the Vaughn school over the past decade—including a performance pay plan and incentives for all staff—are available at the school's Web site at <http://www.vaughn.k12.ca.us>.

A Guide for School Reformers

Let's Put Parents Back in Charge!

by Joseph L. Bast & Herbert J. Walberg, Ph.D.

At its root, the campaign for parental choice in education is about relying on *capitalism* to educate our children. Opponents demonize parental choice in education by tapping the public's confusion about competition, profits, and prices. The anti-choice campaign is really a thinly veiled anti-capitalism campaign. To counter this, we must educate millions of Americans about what capitalism is, how it works, and why it should be trusted in education.

Joseph Bast and Herb Walberg, president and chairman, respectively, of The Heartland Institute, make the case for parental choice in education by explaining and defending capitalism. **Let's Put Parents Back in Charge!** is the first effort to join these two subjects in one book since Milton Friedman proposed vouchers in *Capitalism and Freedom* in 1962.

To order, call The Heartland Institute at 312/377-4000; or visit Heartland's online store at www.heartland.org.

Who Needs School Choice?

Caitlin, Faith, and Jacob do

by M. Royce Van Tassell

A single mother of two girls, Caitlin and Faith, and one boy, Jacob, Yvonne Trujillo is struggling to give her children the hope she enjoyed as a little girl.

Growing up, Yvonne attended

Annunciation School, a Catholic school in Denver, Colorado. Her teachers, often nuns, were strict disciplinarians, but they tempered their authority with compassion.

Since then, Yvonne has married, had three children, and was divorced about

three and a half years ago. With her former husband, her sister, and her mother watching the children, she can work as a part-time cashier at the Kroger grocery store.

Although not impressed by the school's achievement scores, last year Yvonne sent her oldest child, Jacob, to Gilpin Elementary in Denver. Just 1 in 5 Gilpin fourth-graders are reading at a proficient

or advanced level; in writing, the numbers are less than 1 in 16.

Jacob found himself at the bottom of Gilpin's low achievement levels. Despite having poor grades and being "way behind average," he was promoted to second grade. Dissatisfied, Yvonne transferred him to Swansea Elementary, another public school in her neighborhood. Swansea has better test scores than Gilpin, but its students are still failing. Roughly 1 in 3 Swansea fourth-graders read or write at a proficient or advanced level.

Academics, though, were not Jacob's only problem. Like many first-grade boys, he often had trouble sitting still in class. He would talk out of turn or disturb his classmates. One day he and four friends went to the bathroom, where they quickly found some mischief. It started

"Yvonne was stunned when Judge Meyer halted the program. 'He knows that the opportunity is for the kids, so why do we have to keep going back and fighting?' she asks."

with the water, then the paper towels. Soon they were throwing sopping balls of paper towels at the ceiling, hoping some would stick.

Predictably, they were caught. When Yvonne came in to discuss the incident with Jacob's principal, she was upset. While not absolving Jacob of responsibility, she couldn't understand why Jacob's teacher had given bathroom passes to five first-grade boys at the same time. Any teacher should have known that combination would not end well.

About this time Yvonne heard that the Colorado legislature was enacting a parental choice plan. Because she lives in the Denver school district—one of the 11 failing districts required to participate in the program—she hoped the plan would help Jacob attend Annunciation, the same elementary school she attended as a child.

A coalition opposing parental choice filed suit to stop the plan. The coalition alleged the Colorado plan violated a state constitutional requirement guaranteeing local control of education. Yvonne was stunned when Judge Meyer agreed with that view and halted the program.

"He knows that the opportunity is for the kids, so why do we have to keep going back and fighting?" she asks.

Of course, for Yvonne that isn't just a hypothetical question. Caitlin and Faith are about to start in the same schools that are already failing Jacob.

Royce Van Tassell is executive director of Education Excellence Utah. His email address is royce@edexutah.org.



HILLSDALE ACADEMY

— A MODEL FOR AMERICA —

Hillsdale Academy's K-8 Reference Guide is now available online!
AND IT'S FREE!

Currently in its twelfth year, Hillsdale Academy consistently places in the top four percent nationwide in standardized testing. Today, the school's complete academic program for Grades K-8 is available to you! Already in use by more than 400 schools coast to coast, the *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide* includes:

- curriculum and book lists
- school culture guidelines
- parent and faculty handbooks
- weekly curriculum outlines

To download your **FREE** copy of the *Reference Guide*, log on to:
www.hillsdale.edu/academy

Printed copies of the K-8 *Guide* are available for purchase at \$100 each by calling
(800) 989-7323.



INTERVIEW



“The Little School on the Prairie”

an interview with
Victoria Martino

by George A. Clowes

Victoria Martino knew students at her school were doing well. After all, she had co-founded the little school on the prairie, Mountain View Academy in Greeley, Colorado, simply to be able to teach using a highly effective instructional program. But even she couldn't believe the Stanford Achievement Test results they received at the end of the school's second year of operation in 1995-96. The students' scores in all grades were in the top 10 percent in the nation. A call to the scoring hotline confirmed the results.

Martino really wasn't surprised at achieving such outstanding results, nor were the three other teachers who had joined her in establishing the nonprofit, nonsectarian, private school in 1994. All had considerable prior experience teaching in the public schools and all had successfully used the instruc-

tional program they were using at Mountain View Academy for six years in the public schools. They knew the program worked. In fact, it was their belief in the effectiveness of the instructional program that was the prime reason for opening the school.

That belief has become a reality. The students at Mountain View Academy have continued, year after year, to score in the top 10 percent of the nation. For the students, 25 percent of whom are low-income, this high level of achievement opens up a broader range of career opportunities, the likelihood of better-paying jobs, and the prospect of living lives that are richer intellectually and culturally.

For Martino and the teachers at the school, the rewards also have been great. Their achievement was recognized by U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige last September when he named Mountain

View Academy a 2003 recipient of the No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon School Award. The award recognizes schools for outstanding achievement, such as dramatically improving student test scores or scoring in the top 10 percent of schools in the nation. Mountain View Academy was one of only 47 private schools in the nation to receive the award.

Martino, a director of Mountain View Academy, started her teaching career in public schools in Pennsylvania after receiving a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in early childhood education. Subsequently, she and her husband moved to Colorado, where she taught in public schools in Greeley and then, for the past 10 years, at Mountain View Academy. Martino recently spoke with *School Reform News* Managing Editor George Clowes.

Clowes: What motivated you to start your own school?

Martino: People come up to me and say, “Oh, this must have been a lifelong dream!” It wasn't. I had been teaching in public schools for 23 years and I would have been perfectly happy to stay for the rest of my career at the public school where I was teaching if we had been given one track for the curriculum we wanted to teach. That didn't seem like much to ask out of a four-track school, but even that was too much.

It started about 15 years ago. There were four of us teaching at one of the elementary schools in Greeley and we had come across a phonics-based curriculum that was based on sound research, and we started looking into it on our own. Most of the teachers in our building were completely Whole Language advocates and did not believe in phonemic awareness, but I had been trained in phonemic awareness and its effectiveness back East.

When I read the research on the curriculum in Project Follow-Through, which was one of the largest government-funded educational experiments in the history of

the U.S. Department of Education, I thought, “This sounds almost too good to be true—this Direct Instruction approach is everything you ever need to know about teaching someone to read in a very systematic, sequential program.” After I had paid to take the Direct Instruction training in Eugene, Oregon, I concluded it was the best program available for children in the United States.

Within our public school, we started using the program and became more effective teachers. Our students were excelling. But the Whole Language teachers didn't want anything to do with Direct Instruction and this created a huge division.

Clowes: Why were they against it?

Martino: I think they were somewhat threatened by it, but I think mostly they didn't understand it. Once you really understand what Dr. Siegfried Engelmann did in developing this program, his genius—and it is pure genius—just unfolds as you're teaching. Every year that you teach, you get more insight into how it works, and you

are more in awe of the program than ever before—how quickly and easily it helps you as a teacher facilitate teaching young children how to read.

Another concern people have with Direct Instruction is how it holds teachers accountable. Engelmann has said that if the child can understand English and understand commands in English and has a good grasp of the English language, we can teach every child to read. If the child doesn't learn, it's the teacher's and the administration's fault. When you say that, you're getting into the big “A” word—Accountability—that the teacher unions and the administrators don't want to mention. That's why some schools that have had great success with Direct Instruction have stopped using the program.

We taught the program for six years. The longer we did, the more unprofessional coworkers became. We offered to help them, but they weren't interested. It got to be very uncomfortable. Teachers who were telling students to become life-long learners and always to be open-minded, weren't open-minded themselves and were trying to stop the use of the program.

By this time, a number of teachers had been trained in Direct Instruction and we had one track out of four, kindergarten through fifth grade, in the program. Parents were requesting our classes because our students were excelling. We suggested giving the parents that “C” word—Choice—but the principal would not agree.

At that point, I considered leaving teaching altogether, but when I said I would love to teach a small kindergarten class on my own using Direct Instruction, my husband started looking for a room to rent for me to teach my own private kindergarten. When word of this slipped out, three other teachers who were teaching the Direct Instruction program said they wanted to come with me. So my husband started looking for a small building to rent. When we realized there wasn't a facility in our area that would be acceptable for a school, we started looking for land and purchased six acres.

We put four portable buildings on our land, left the public system, and opened the doors of Mountain View Academy in September of 1994. In 1998 we built our existing permanent facility.

Clowes: *Does the Direct Instruction curriculum include science and social studies as well as reading and math?*

Martino: There isn't a separate curriculum in science. At the middle school level, there is an American History curriculum.

The reason there isn't a separate science program is in the first two years of Direct Instruction, the rule of thumb is, you learn to read. After the first two years in Direct Instruction, then you read to learn. In Reading

“No one thinks there's anything wrong with a Tiger Woods going out and hitting perhaps a thousand balls with one club to practice one stroke. ...Yet when it comes to academics, it's almost heresy to have students memorize their times tables or any other facts.”

Mastery 3, a third-grade-level reader, students read to learn. All of the stories in Reading Mastery 3 and Reading Mastery 4 are very factual stories about science, social studies, history, and geography. The children are still increasing their reading fluency and mastery, but they are learning facts and increasing their knowledge.

Clowes: *What is the philosophy behind Direct Instruction?*

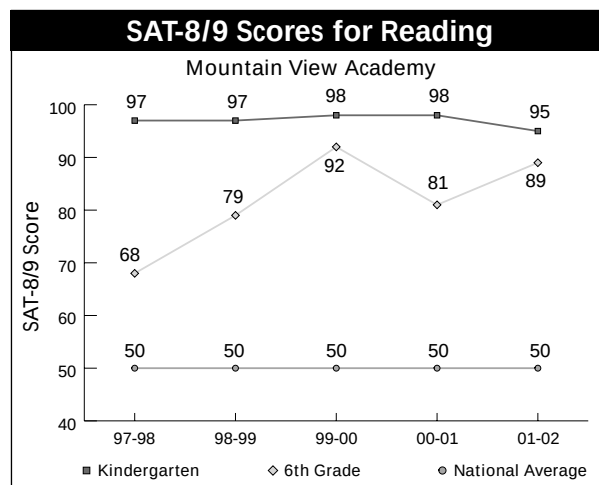
Martino: “Every child can learn. Every child can be successful, and every teacher can be an effective teacher.”

What the Direct Instruction curriculum really does is prevent teachers from re-inventing the wheel, like so many teachers have to do with certain curricula. In Core Knowledge, for example, you're given the outcomes they want the children to know, but they don't provide the process of how to get there. As a result, the teacher is constantly sharing lesson plans and going to lesson plan conventions.

That's not the way it is with Direct Instruction. Direct Instruction is a fine-tuned program that is field-tested. Every lesson is thoroughly field-tested before publication. It's equivalent to a de-bugged computer program. In fact, our school did some field testing for Direct Instruction at our third- and fourth-grade levels. A teacher would teach a lesson, and provide feedback to the authors on what went well and what didn't.

Clowes: *One of the major criticisms of the program is that it doesn't allow for teacher creativity.*

Martino: But it does. Each teacher puts his or her own personality into it. Direct Instruction lets you be creative because you are not drained by trying to put together lesson plans, or trying to decide what book



would be best. Every manual the teacher needs is included in one kit for a specific subject.

What people don't realize is that practice is required in academics just as much as it is in sports or in music. No one thinks there's anything wrong with a Tiger Woods going out and hitting perhaps a thousand balls with one club to practice one stroke. Or with a pianist practicing a musical piece over and over for a concert. Yet when it comes to academics, it's almost heresy to have students memorize their times tables or any other facts.

There's nothing wrong with bringing children to mastery before you take them to the next level. What's so great about Direct Instruction is that every day's lesson is the foundation for tomorrow. Hence, every year's lesson is the foundation for the following year. The program is very sequential by design so there are no gaps or overlaps in instruction.

Clowes: *What about a child's readiness to learn? What has been your experience in taking children with widely varying abilities when they come into kindergarten?*

Martino: We do get children who have been exposed to a wide range of preschool and day care situations, but it really doesn't matter as long as the children are old enough—almost six with boys and at least five and a half with girls. I have found that the pacesetters in my class are the children that have the cognitive development and the ability to listen to something for 10 minutes and stay on track. Direct Instruction at this level is fast-paced and very aggressive. When children are ready to learn they are self-motivated, learning is easy for them, and they love it. They're unstoppable.

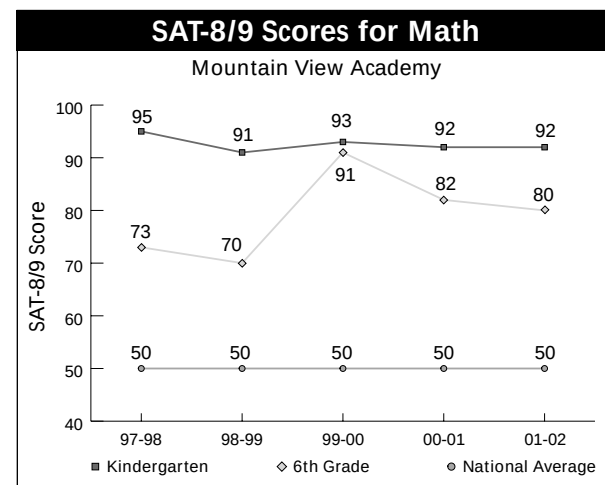
I would rather have an average student that was very mature than a very bright student that was very immature. The only way that maturation develops is over time. I encourage parents to give their children the gift of time at this young age.

I assess every incoming child in the spring to see how many pre-skills I need to teach before I get into the curriculum proper. We group students at our school by ability so I use the Direct Instruction placement test to make sure that everyone in the classroom places in the level that I use.

Clowes: *What are your test results like?*

Martino: We use the Stanford Achievement Test, which tells our parents how our students are doing compared to other private schools in the nation. Our test results from the very first year we tested were phenomenal. We couldn't believe it at first. We knew we were working hard, but we were taking every possible child that wanted to be here. We took children who had been labeled Special Education for five years in the public sector. Within a year and a half the students were at grade level. We took anybody and everybody. We worked hard with remediations and regular teaching and corrective programs, and we worked hard to prove to people that this curriculum really does work.

Our test scores in 1996 were wonderful, above the 90th percentile, which is where they've stayed ever since. We take in the same children that go to the local public schools where bright children are just doing aver-



age on state tests.

I regard myself as a public school teacher because I deal with the public. I don't like the tug-of-war that people create of private vs. public, non-sectarian vs. sectarian, one against the other. There should be only one distinction between schools—schools that are highly effective and schools that aren't effective.

Clowes: *What does it cost parents to send a child to your school?*

Martino: For comparison, the average per-pupil expenditure for Colorado public schools is \$7,016. The cost at Mountain View Academy for first grade through sixth

“I don't like the tug-of-war that people create of private vs. public, non-sectarian vs. sectarian, one against the other. There should be only one distinction between schools—schools that are highly effective and schools that aren't effective.”

grade is \$5,300 a year. In addition, there are book and assessment fees that total \$280 dollars. Kindergarten is \$4,500 a year and Pre-K is \$2,500. Most of our tuition goes to pay salaries and benefits. Facility costs and property taxes are our next largest expenditure.

We're the little school on the prairie, the “Pioneers.” We're doing what has never been done before in our area: a nonprofit, nonsectarian, independent day-school producing scores that are in the top 10 percent of the country. Yet we are always struggling for scholarship money. We're in an agricultural area and we have a lot of poor farm children who want to be at our school and who need scholarships. When we opened, we received a grant from a local philanthropic family but since that ran out, we have been searching for scholarship funds in addition to the fundraising our parents do.

Here we are, one of the best schools in the nation located in northern Colorado, a National Blue Ribbon School, and yet we're scrambling for funds every single day. We're producing what the President says schools should be producing. Unfortunately, our scholarship demands are always more than what we have to offer. Sometimes we have to turn families away due to lack of scholarship funds and that's really hard.

INTERNET INFO

Mountain View Academy's 2003 No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon School application is available online at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/2003/applications/co-mountain-view-academy.pdf>.

Court

Continued from page 1

major—a possibility since he declared two majors—he would have received the funds. Had he delayed the declaration of his major, he could have received the funds until he declared.

Washington state law is unequivocal on the issue: “No aid shall be awarded to any student who is pursuing a degree in theology.” That law draws its inspiration from the state constitution, which states: “No public money or property shall be appropriated for or applied to any religious worship, exercise or instruction, or the support of any religious establishment[.]”

The United States Constitution is unequivocal on the issue also, with the First Amendment’s Free Exercise Clause providing: “Congress shall make no law ... prohibiting the free exercise [of religion.]” So-called Blaine amendments to restrict funding of religious schools—named after James G. Blaine, a nineteenth-century anti-Catholic politician—were placed in state constitutions specifically to deny what the First Amendment permitted.

The question presented to the Court in the Davey case was: “Does the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution require the state to fund religious instruction, if it provides college scholarships for secular instruction?”

“Freedom of Conscience”

Washington Solicitor General Narda Pierce described the state constitution as limiting the involvement of government in religion “[t]o preserve freedom of conscience for all its citizens in matters of religious faith and belief.” In the case of the Promise Scholarships, she argued, “all the state has done has been to decline to fund religious instruction wherever it occurs, including in a theology degree program.”

However, Pierce acknowledged her statement was untrue when Justice Antonin Scalia pointed out that the state in fact will fund religious instruction as long as a student does not major in theology. When Pierce tried to claim such funding was “a rare circumstance,” Scalia scoffed.

“...Justice Antonin Scalia pointed out that the state in fact will fund religious instruction as long as a student does not major in theology.”

“Everybody who takes a theology course has to major in theology?” he asked incredulously. “I don’t think it’s rare at all. Probably most of the students at Northwest College take theology courses. It’s ... a religious institution, and that’s perfectly okay, and the state is willing to fund that.”

Scalia also pressed Pierce to explain why, if the state was not permitted to discriminate among religious sects, it should be able to discriminate between religion and non-religion.

“You can study anything you like and get it subsidized except religion,” he said. “Why is that not violating the principle of neutrality?”

Pierce, at the prompting of Justice David Souter, argued the distinction is between training to be religious and studying religion in general.

If the state starts making that distinction, “the entanglement problem is going to be enormous,” Solicitor General Theodore B. Olson said later, arguing for the Bush administration as a “friend of the court” on Davey’s behalf. The line should be drawn by individuals, he argued, “individuals making genuinely free, independent choices to make that dispensation.”

“Religious Discrimination”

In his opening remarks, Olson wasted no time in making clear his strong disagreement with the state’s benign interpretation of the law at issue.

“The Promise Scholarship program practices the plainest form of religious discrimination,” he said. “It disqualifies the one course of study that is taught from a religious perspective. The clear and unmistakable message is that religion and preparation for a career in the ministry is disfavored and discouraged.”

Justice Sandra Day O’Connor interrupted Olson with an almost sarcastic reminder that “not funding religious instruction by tax money” had been the practice in the U.S. for two centuries.

She added, “I mean, that’s ... as old as the country itself, isn’t it?”

Olson agreed, but immediately reminded her: “But there is the other tradition that is as old as the country itself, is (sic) the free exercise component of the religion clauses, which this Court has said repeatedly mandates neutrality.”

Justice John Paul Stevens then shot the question of “burden” at Olson. That issue was raised several times during the oral arguments and appears likely to play a part in the Court’s ruling, which is expected by this summer. Instead of weighing the constitutional burden of the law, several justices appeared to be weighing the practical burden to Davey of the loss of a \$1,125 scholarship.

“But how is his free exercise chilled at all? Can’t he practice his religion just as he always would and become a minister?” asked Stevens.

Olson explained Davey would practice his religion “without the same subsidy that is made available to every other citizen except someone who wants to study to be a minister.” He reminded the Court of its previous rulings, where it had said, “religious tests for governmental benefits violate the Free Exercise Clause.”

“This is a religious test,” said Olson. “If the person wants to take a program in theology, he’s disqualified.”

School Vouchers

The Court clearly was interested in hearing how this case applied to school vouchers. Pierce had barely opened her mouth before O’Connor demanded to know: “Is it like a voucher program ...?”

“[I]t works like a voucher program to the extent that it’s for educational expenses,” responded Pierce, who added it wasn’t like a paycheck where the recipient had the funds to spend on whatever he wanted.

Arguing on behalf of Davey, Jay A. Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, responded to O’Connor’s question during his opening remarks. The check is not written to the school, Sekulow pointed out, but is written to the student.

O’Connor asked Sekulow whether the state could bar the use of vouchers at religious schools if vouchers were made available for use in all schools of a certain grade level.

“I would think not,” responded Sekulow.

“So what you are urging here would have a major impact then, would it not, on voucher programs?” O’Connor asked.

“Well, it would,” responded Sekulow.

George A. Clowes is managing editor of School Reform News. His email address is clowes@heartland.org.

Education Next Offers Research, Commentary, Reform

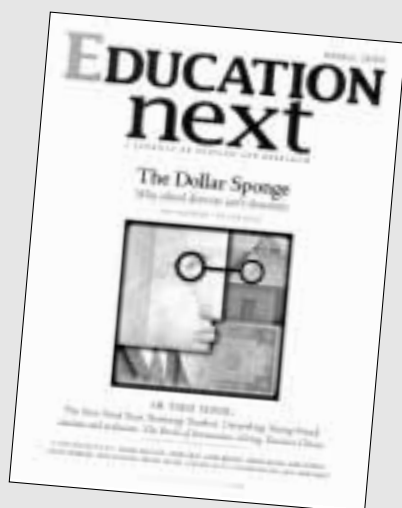
The Winter 2004 issue of the scholarly journal, *Education Next*, has been published by the Hoover Institution. The issue includes articles on autism and inclusion, how to stop fraud in testing, attempts to reform Head Start, retention of teachers in urban schools, why choice is good for teachers, and a series of papers on school finance.

The school finance articles focus on how districts get themselves into financial trouble, with a proposal from William G. Ouchi for avoiding such problems by pushing much of the decision-making out of the central office and down to the schools themselves.

“Why Choice is Good for Teachers,” an article by David J. Ferrero of the Gates Foundation, offers a proposal for “ending the pedagogical holy wars” over the best way to educate children. Rather than seeking to impose “the one best system,” Ferrero suggests educators apply their appreciation for pluralism to education, too, and let teachers choose the school that fits their philosophy.

Education Next is sponsored by the Hoover Institution, the Harvard Program on Education Policy and Governance, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, and the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

— G.C.



INTERNET INFO

The Winter 2004 issue of *Education Next* is available online at <http://www.educationnext.org/> 20041. Subscriptions are available from the Hoover Institution through the *Education Next* Web site, by calling 650/723-3373, or by email to hooverpress@hoover.stanford.edu.

**I believe in freedom.
What do YOU believe in?**

Colorful, high-quality, extra durable bumper stickers look great on file cabinets, doors, windows, and folders as well as cars. A great present for friends, coworkers, relatives, and neighbors. Impress your friends! Irritate your enemies! Place your order today!

\$1.49 each
\$9.99 for 10

\$37.50 for 50
\$59.99 for 100

To order, visit www.heartland.org or call The Heartland Institute at 312.377.4000. Or, send a check or money order to The Heartland Institute 19 South LaSalle Street #903 Chicago, IL 60603

INTERNET INFO

For more information, a Resource Page on the *Locke v. Davey* case—including a transcript of the December 2, 2003 oral argument and copies of the amicus briefs—is available on the Web page of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life at <http://pewforum.org/school-vouchers/locke/>.

School Choice Programs Tighten Accountability Measures

But over-regulation could curtail program growth

by Lisa Snell

Florida's three school choice programs recently have been the subject of several negative reports in the *Palm Beach Post* and other local newspapers, pointing out the failure of state officials to provide oversight. The three programs—Opportunity Scholarships, the McKay Program for students with disabilities, and corporate tax credit scholarships—provide scholarships to more than 24,000 children to attend private schools. Of Florida's 2,000 private schools, about 1,163 participate in at least one of the three programs.

The news reports highlighted the state's lack of data to match up the amount of voucher and tax credit dollars spent with the students who actually received disbursements. An audit report issued by Florida's chief financial officer, Tom Gallagher, found some voucher students were taking money from more than one choice program, and some private schools may have received funds for students they did not enroll. The audit made specific recommendations for improving the fiscal monitoring of the school choice programs.

The Florida Department of Education and state legislature have taken several steps to improve monitoring of the programs. The Department of Education has established a student database and instituted additional compliance measures for scholarship organizations and private schools in order to prevent fraud and help maintain the fiscal integrity of the programs.

The department also has required all participating private schools to file an online reporting form with basic data about financial viability of the school and criminal background checks of school employees. Most schools are expected to comply by a January deadline.

In December, a task force examining the McKay scholarships presented the Florida legislature with a bill that would require scholarship-accepting schools and the Department of Education to implement a host of accountability measures, including:

- criminal background checks on school employees;
- periodic state visits to assess the schools;
- periodic reviews of student performance and need;
- prohibitions on students receiving funds from multiple programs;
- cutting off funds to schools not meeting standards.

In light of the negative reports on the administration of the corporate tax credit program, the Florida legislature voted to rescind a \$38 million increase in program funding.

Tightening Up

Other states also have acted recently to tighten reporting requirements for their school choice programs.



Members of the Florida Board of Education—(left to right) Bill Proctor, Phil Handy, Sally Bradshaw, Jim Horne, T. Willard Fair, Julia Johnson, Charles Garcia, and Linda Eads—monitor the state's three school choice programs.

INTERNET INFO

The December 11, 2003 audit report from the Florida Department of Financial Services, "Audit, Corporate Tax Credit Program, Florida Department of Financial Services," is available online at <http://www.fldfs.com/aadir/report%5Fpackage.pdf>.

The Goldwater Institute's December 11, 2003 report by Carrie Lips Lukas, "The Arizona Scholarship Tax Credit: Providing Choice for Arizona Taxpayers and Students," is available from the institute's Web site at <http://www.goldwaterinstitute.org/pdf/materials/380.pdf>.

The Goldwater Institute's December 11, 2003 companion report by Dan Lips, "The Impact of Tuition Scholarships on Low-Income Families: A Survey of Arizona School Choice Trust Parents," is available

from the institute's Web site at <http://www.goldwaterinstitute.org/pdf/materials/392.pdf>.

The December 19, 2003 report from the Center for Education Innovation at Florida State University, "Increasing Private School Capacity for Voucher Students," by Mary Goldsmith, is available at <http://cei.coe.fsu.edu/Private%20School%20Capacity%20report.htm>.

The September 2003 *NBER Digest* abstract by Andrew Balls, "How Deregulation Spurs Growth," based on National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 9560, "Regulation and Investment," by Alberto Alesina, Silvia Adragna, Giuseppe Nicoletti and Fabio Schiantarelli, is available online at <http://www.nber.org/digest/sep03/w9560.html>.

In Wisconsin, state lawmakers have drafted two bills that would significantly increase the Department of Public Instruction's authority over the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. Both proposals include three provisions:

- stricter requirements that participating schools demonstrate financial viability;
- an explicit provision allowing the department to remove schools from the program; and,
- background checks for employees at the schools.

Similarly, in Arizona a new law requires school tuition organizations to provide the state government with the total number and amount of contributions received, the total number of children awarded scholarships, the dollar amount of each scholarship, and the names of the schools that received those scholarships.

Arizona Tax Credit

A report from the Phoenix-based Goldwater Institute provides information on the success of Arizona's tax credit program. Its recommendations offer insight into how best to monitor school choice programs in other states, too.

The study, *The Arizona Scholarship Tax Credit: Providing Choice for Arizona*

Taxpayers and Students, found that since the program's inception, taxpayers have donated \$84 million to help send students to schools of choice. In 2002 alone, 50,000 Arizonans donated more than \$26 million to fund scholarships for 19,000 students. More than 5,700 Arizona children are on waiting lists for additional scholarships.

In addition, the Goldwater study found:

- School tuition organizations overwhelmingly consider financial need when they allocate scholarships.
- Without the scholarships, approximately 4,000 recipients would have to transfer to public schools.
- The savings generated from having those students transfer from public to private school offset much of the cost of the tax credit to the state.

The Goldwater study also highlights the important role donors should play in monitoring charitable contributions for tax credits. "Donors are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their contributions are put to the best use," notes study author Carrie Lukas, policy director with the Independent Women's Forum.

"One of the strengths of the scholarship tax credit is that it puts power in the hands of individuals to allocate resources instead of giving all control to

the state," writes Lukas. "Mandated means-testing takes discretion away from school tuition organizations and donors."

The Goldwater study suggests creating a Web site sponsored by the Arizona Department of Revenue that would post financial information about school tuition organizations and encourage best practices by rewarding organizations that follow them with greater publicity. A Web site would help empower donors to decide which scholarship organizations are worthy of their support. This Web site suggestion is one that is readily applicable to Florida.

Avoiding Over-Regulation

The publicity in Florida over the lack of oversight has led school choice critics to call for regulating the state's choice programs far more tightly than needed to prevent fraud and ensure fiscal integrity. For example, the *Palm Beach Post* and other Florida newspapers have editorialized in favor of requiring testing of all school choice students, adding restrictions to special education vouchers, and imposing credentialing and accreditation regulations on private schools and their staff.

Research suggests there are dangers in over-regulation. A September 2003 study from the National Bureau of Economic Research examined differences in product market deregulation among OECD countries over the past three decades and found barriers to entry were associated with reduced investment and slower economic growth.

"The implications of the analysis are clear: Regulatory reforms—in particular those that liberalize entry—are very likely to spur investment," conclude the researchers. By contrast, "tight regulation of product markets restricts investment."

Over-regulation of educational choice markets could also slow growth and investment in Florida's private schools. A December 2003 report from Florida State University's Center for Education Innovation found the most cost-effective way to increase private school capacity in Florida was to avoid regulating private schools.

Governor Jeb Bush has argued that while it is important for private schools and scholarship organizations to maintain fiscal integrity, it is also important to avoid over-regulation and allow the parental choice mechanism to remain the main source of accountability. The proof of the effectiveness of vouchers, he told the *Miami Herald* in December, is that some 25,000 children are using them, and their parents are happy about it.

"This is a program based on a simple premise, which is that if a parent unilaterally believes their child's individual education plan is not being fulfilled they can move to another option," Bush said.

Lisa Snell is director of the education program for the Reason Foundation in Los Angeles. Her email address is lsnell@reason.org.

Character Education in Public Schools

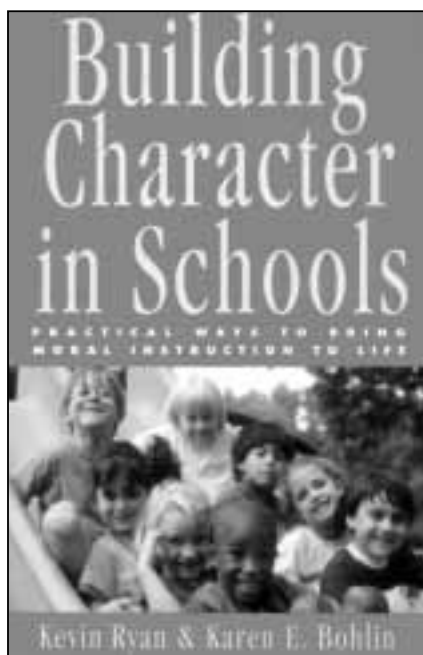
Role Models, Self-Discipline, and Communities of Virtue

by George A. Clowes

When teaching character education in public schools is proposed, a frequent response is, Why? One good reason is that since schools inevitably influence the character of their students, it would be prudent to ensure this 12-years-long influence is a positive one.

"[C]hildren cannot enter the educational system at age four and stay until age sixteen or seventeen without having their character and their moral values profoundly affected by the experience," write Kevin Ryan and Karen E. Bohlin in their new book, *Building Character in Schools: Practical Ways to Bring Moral Instruction to Life* (Jossey-Bass, 2003; 304 pages; \$17.95, ISBN: 0787962449).

Children also live in an influential pop culture dominated by what Ryan



has called "such dubious heroes as Eminem, Jennifer Lopez, Adam Sandler, and various professional-sports personalities," all of whom are role models for character development.

Ryan and Bohlin, respectively founding director and assistant director of the Center for the Advancement of

Ethics and Character at Boston University, point out that study and self-discipline are necessary for most children to succeed academically. These behaviors don't develop effortlessly. They emerge from the focused effort that a good teacher—recognized as a moral authority rather than an equal—can encourage to flower.

"Perhaps the most valuable result of all education," wrote Thomas Huxley, "is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not; it is the first lesson that ought to be learned." That nineteenth-century lesson in the development of good habits is cited by Ryan and Bohlin as just as applicable to the twenty-first century.

In *Building Character in Schools*, the authors address the responsibilities of adults in the development of character and provide practical guidelines for schools that seek to become "communities of virtue where responsibility, hard work, honesty, and kindness are modeled, taught, expected, celebrated, and continually practiced."

George A. Clowes is managing editor of School Reform News. His email address is clowes@heartland.org.

Citizenship and Character

The Founding Fathers don't get much respect these days. In school, children are more likely to be taught that George Washington owned slaves than that he played an indispensable role in the creation of the Republic and in establishing its guiding principles.

In the popular TV sitcom "The West Wing," Washington's *Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation*, which he wrote out when he was about 16, are quoted only to mock and to use in decrying the first President as an insufferably prissy person. Thomas Jefferson fares even worse, with even the guides at Monticello spreading the calumny that he cohabited with a slave.

Such presentations strongly suggest to young people that the founders of the nation should not serve as their role models for today. Fortunately, there are organizations like the Bill of Rights Institute that present a more balanced view of American history and of the principled individuals responsible for shaping the nation. The Institute's mission is "to educate high school students and teachers about our country's Founding principles through programs that teach the words and ideas of the Founders; the liberties and freedoms guaranteed in our Founding documents; and how America's Founding principles affect and shape a free society."

The Institute offers a character edu-

cation curriculum designed to increase student understanding of the fundamental civic values necessary for personal integrity and responsible citizenship. Titled "Citizenship and Character: Understanding America's Civic Values," the curriculum examines civic values from a dual perspective:

- the values embedded in the founding documents of the United States; and
- the values demonstrated in the lives of the founders and other great Americans in history.

The curriculum focuses on the following civic values:

- courage
- industry
- respect
- responsibility
- consideration
- justice
- perseverance
- initiative
- moderation
- integrity

Lesson plans from the Institute also cover the values of compassion, honesty, honor, and humility, and also address what is meant by the "the pursuit of happiness."

The "Citizenship and Character" curriculum features a 10-unit teacher's guide. As well as an accompanying CD-ROM that lets students face a variety of simulations using the civic value they are studying, the teacher's guide contains:

- content-rich lesson plans;
- focus questions that explore the civic value;
- primary sources;
- historical narratives with discussion questions; and
- a collection of quotes from the Founders.

In the lesson on courage, for example, Anne Hutchinson and John Minor Wisdom are held up as exemplifying the value of courage. In Puritan Massachusetts, Hutchinson challenged the established religion and government of her day. She lost her life as a result, but her courage in defending her beliefs helped lay the foundation for the religious liberty Americans now treasure. Some 300 years later, federal judge John Minor Wisdom challenged racist attitudes in the South and helped begin the process of desegregation, but not without personal cost.

George Washington and Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. serve as exemplars for the virtue of moderation. Though the letter of the Constitution did not limit the term of the President, its spirit did, so Washington established a new precedent for the peaceful transfer of power by voluntarily relinquishing the Presidency after serving just two terms. As an African-American in the military, Davis moderated his anger at racist treatment and discrimination by focusing on achieving his goals. He became the first African-American general in the U.S. Air Force.

— G.C.

The Six Pillars of Character

For character education, many schools have adopted the Character Counts! program from the Josephson Institute of Ethics, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization based in Marina del Rey, California. The Institute and its partners in the Character Counts! Coalition are committed to improving the ethical quality of America's young people through character education.

The six pillars of character are core ethical values that form the foundation of the Character Counts! youth-ethics initiative.

Trustworthiness

- Be honest
- Don't deceive, cheat or steal
- Be reliable—do what you say you'll do
- Have the courage to do the right thing
- Build a good reputation
- Be loyal—stand by your family, friends, and country

Respect

- Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule
- Be tolerant of differences
- Use good manners, not bad language
- Be considerate of the feelings of others
- Don't threaten, hit, or hurt anyone
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements

Responsibility

- Do what you are supposed to do
- Persevere: keep on trying!
- Always do your best
- Use self-control
- Be self-disciplined
- Think before you act—consider the consequences
- Be accountable for your choices

Fairness

- Play by the rules
- Take turns and share
- Be open-minded; listen to others
- Don't take advantage of others
- Don't blame others carelessly

Caring

- Be kind
- Be compassionate and show you care
- Express gratitude
- Forgive others
- Help people in need

Citizenship

- Do your share to make your school and community better
- Cooperate
- Stay informed; vote
- Be a good neighbor
- Obey laws and rules
- Respect authority
- Protect the environment

— G.C.

INTERNET INFO

Information about the curriculum on "Citizenship and Character: Understanding America's Civic Values" is available on the Web site of the Bill of Rights Institute at <http://www.billofrightsinstitute.org>.

INTERNET INFO

Information about the Josephson Institute of Ethics and "The Six Pillars of Character" is available at <http://www.charactercounts.org/defsix.htm>.

JUST THE FACTS

Survey Results: Student Attitudes Towards Cheating

by George A. Clowes

Several organizations conduct surveys on attitudes and opinions of American teenagers regarding cheating. According to a 2002 Public Agenda survey of 1,008 teenagers nationally, four in 10 students say their school has problems with too many students cheating on tests.

Who's Who Among American High School Students Annual Survey of High Achievers

This survey spans three decades (1970-2000) and is the most comprehensive database available online of the attitudes and opinions of high-achieving teens on a range of subjects, including cheating.

In the 1999 survey, 84 percent of the high school students judged cheating to be "common" among their peers. That high percentage was not surprising in light of the fact that 78 percent of the same students confessed they themselves had cheated. Ninety-five percent of the students who cheated said they did not get caught.

In a survey of college students some 60 years ago, only 20 percent admitted to having cheated in high school; today, only 22 percent report they do not cheat.

The most common forms of cheating in 1999 were:

- Copying someone else's homework: 65%
- Cheating on a quiz or test: 39%
- Using published book notes instead of reading the book: 33%
- Plagiarizing published work: 10%

When asked why they cheated, students responded as follows:

- Competition for good grades: 56%
- Didn't seem like a big deal: 56%
- Not interested in the subject: 30%
- Didn't think I'd get caught: 25%
- To get into a good college: 16%
- Parents encouraged me: <1%

When asked how difficult it would be to obtain test questions or answers at their high school, more than half of the students (56 percent) said it would be "easy" or "not very difficult."

Rutgers University Surveys

Donald McCabe, a professor of management at Rutgers University, has conducted a number of surveys of cheating among high school students in recent years. In a 2001 survey of 4,500 high school students, he found more than half admitted to plagiarizing from the Internet, three-quarters (74 percent) admitted they had cheated on exams or tests, and 97 percent admitted to cheating on homework.

In another study of 500 middle and high school students, McCabe found more than two-thirds didn't consider doing work with classmates to be cheating, and half didn't see anything wrong with parents doing their homework for them.

When McCabe asked his student respondents why they cheated, many cited "academic pressure," but the most common response was that the adult world sets such poor examples. In sur-

veying faculty, McCabe found almost 90 percent reported being aware of cheating occurring in their classroom within the past two years, but almost one-third (32 percent) said they did nothing about it.

Josephson Institute of Ethics

Since 1992, the Josephson Institute of Ethics has conducted a survey of the ethics of American youth every two years. The Institute, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization based in Marina del Rey, California, was the force behind the creation of the Character Counts! Coalition, a partnership of more than 500 educational and youth-serving organizations committed to improving the ethical quality of America's young people through character education.

The Institute's 2002 survey of 12,474 high school students was released with the observation that "cheating, lying, and stealing by high school students have continued their alarming, decade-long upward spiral."

Among the findings:

■ Students who admitted to cheating on an exam at least once during the past year jumped from 61 percent in 1992 to 71 percent in 2000 and 74 percent in 2002.

■ Students who admitted to stealing something from a store during the past year jumped from 31 percent in 1992 to 35 percent in 2000 and 38 percent in 2002.

■ Students who said they would be willing to lie to get a good job jumped from 28 percent in 2000 to 37 percent in 2002.

■ Students who said they had lied to their parents during the past year jumped from 83 percent in 2000 to 93 percent in 2002.

■ Students who said they had lied to their teachers during the past year jumped from 69 percent in 2000 to 83 percent in 2002.

However, some cognitive dissonance appeared evident.

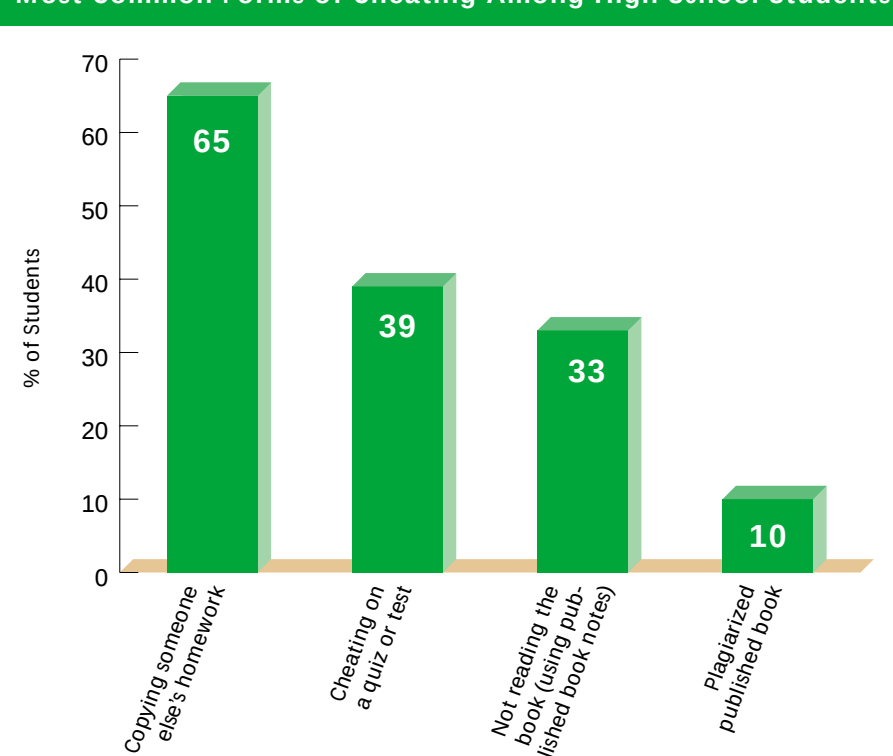
For example, the vast majority of high school students (79 percent) agreed with the statement, "It's not worth it to lie or cheat because it hurts your character." Nevertheless, 43 percent also agreed that "A person has to lie or cheat sometimes in order to succeed," an increase from 34 percent in 2000.

Also, despite the high proportion of students who admitted lying, cheating, and stealing in the past year, three-quarters (76 percent) still said, "When it comes to doing what is right, I am better than most people I know."

Although parents get the blame for many things, they don't seem to be sending the wrong message or mixed messages to their children. Some 84 percent of students said, "My parents want me to do the ethically right thing, no matter what the cost." And only a tiny percentage (7 percent) agreed with the statement, "My parents would rather I cheat than get bad grades."

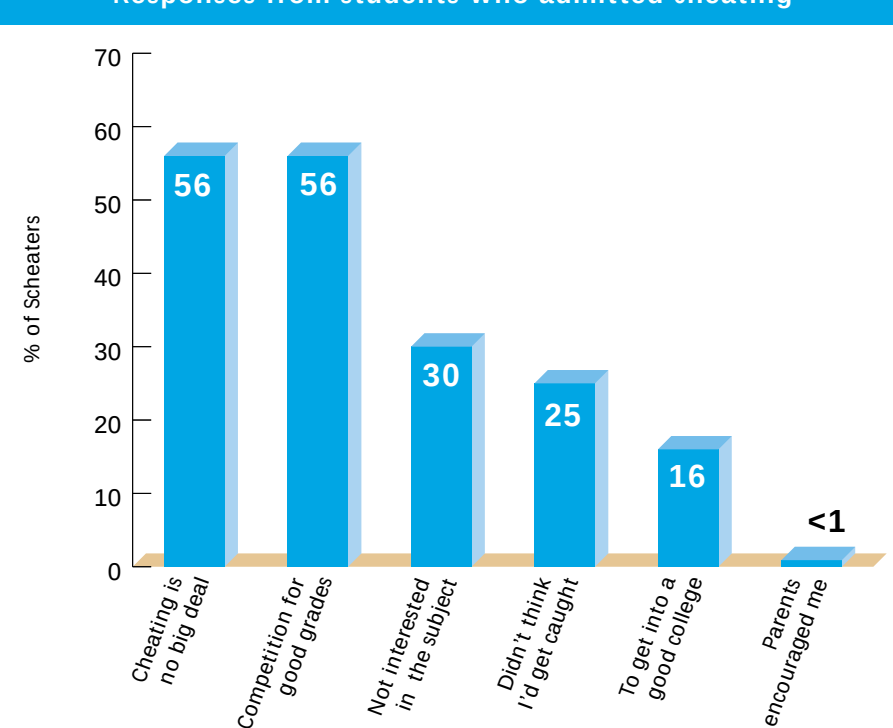
George A. Clowes is managing editor of School Reform News. His email address is clowes@heartland.org.

Most Common Forms of Cheating Among High School Students



Source: Who's Who Among American High School Students 1999 Annual Survey of High Achievers

Why Cheat? Responses from students who admitted cheating



Source: Who's Who Among American High School Students 1999 Annual Survey of High Achievers

INTERNET INFO

Three decades of data (1970-2000) from the Who's Who Among American High School Students Annual Survey of High Achievers are available in query form at the Web site of Who's Who Among American Teachers at <http://www.whoswho-teachers.com/3attitudeANDsopinions/surveyresults.aspx>.

The 2002 survey conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, "Report Card 2002: The Ethics of American Youth," is available online at http://www.josephsoninstitute.org/Survey2002/Report-Card-2002_data-tables.pdf.

A news release on the survey is available at <http://www.josephsoninstitute.org/Survey2002/survey2002-pressrelease.htm>.

Get a free subscription to *School Reform News*, or subscribe for a friend!

Simply fill out and return the form below to receive School Reform News free for a one year.



Return this form today for a FREE subscription to *School Reform News*!

RETURN BY MAIL TO:
The Heartland Institute, 19 S. LaSalle Street #903 Chicago, IL 60603 or FAX this form to **312.377.5000**

Signature Required Below



SIGNATURE _____

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _____

TITLE _____

STREET _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

☐ **I want to receive SRN by email!** Please print your email address below:

EMAIL ADDRESS - PLEASE PRINT _____

Please complete ONLY ONE section:

EDUCATORS _____

Are you a:

☐ Teacher	☐ Principal	☐ Administrator
☐ Librarian	☐ Media Specialist	☐ Board Member
☐ Tech Coordinator	☐ Other: Specify _____	

ACTIVISTS _____

Which best describes your relationship with the private school industry:

☐ Parent or Guardian ☐ Relative of a Student

☐ Association: Type _____

☐ Other: Specify _____

BUSINESS _____

☐ For-profit company ☐ Non-profit organization

☐ Trade association ☐ Chamber of commerce/similar organization

The information you have provided will be kept strictly confidential. The Heartland Institute from time to time offers its mailing list to organizations whose goals are similar to ours. If you prefer not to be contacted by such groups, please check here. _____

Return this form today for a FREE subscription to *School Reform News*!

RETURN BY MAIL TO:
The Heartland Institute, 19 S. LaSalle Street #903 Chicago, IL 60603 or FAX this form to **312.377.5000**

Signature Required Below



SIGNATURE _____

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _____

TITLE _____

STREET _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

☐ **I want to receive SRN by email!** Please print your email address below:

EMAIL ADDRESS - PLEASE PRINT _____

Please complete ONLY ONE section:

EDUCATORS _____

Are you a:

☐ Teacher	☐ Principal	☐ Administrator
☐ Librarian	☐ Media Specialist	☐ Board Member
☐ Tech Coordinator	☐ Other: Specify _____	

ACTIVISTS _____

Which best describes your relationship with the private school industry:

☐ Parent or Guardian ☐ Relative of a Student

☐ Association: Type _____

☐ Other: Specify _____

BUSINESS _____

☐ For-profit company ☐ Non-profit organization

☐ Trade association ☐ Chamber of commerce/similar organization

The information you have provided will be kept strictly confidential. The Heartland Institute from time to time offers its mailing list to organizations whose goals are similar to ours. If you prefer not to be contacted by such groups, please check here. _____

Return this form today for a FREE subscription to *School Reform News*!

RETURN BY MAIL TO:
The Heartland Institute, 19 S. LaSalle Street #903 Chicago, IL 60603 or FAX this form to **312.377.5000**

Signature Required Below



SIGNATURE _____

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _____

TITLE _____

STREET _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

☐ **I want to receive SRN by email!** Please print your email address below:

EMAIL ADDRESS - PLEASE PRINT _____

Please complete ONLY ONE section:

EDUCATORS _____

Are you a:

☐ Teacher	☐ Principal	☐ Administrator
☐ Librarian	☐ Media Specialist	☐ Board Member
☐ Tech Coordinator	☐ Other: Specify _____	

ACTIVISTS _____

Which best describes your relationship with the private school industry:

☐ Parent or Guardian ☐ Relative of a Student

☐ Association: Type _____

☐ Other: Specify _____

BUSINESS _____

☐ For-profit company ☐ Non-profit organization

☐ Trade association ☐ Chamber of commerce/similar organization

The information you have provided will be kept strictly confidential. The Heartland Institute from time to time offers its mailing list to organizations whose goals are similar to ours. If you prefer not to be contacted by such groups, please check here. _____